

Ku Mputu: An African Journey



By Louise Crane

*Leaving home in a sense involves a kind of second birth,
In which we give birth to ourselves.*

-Robert Neely Bellah

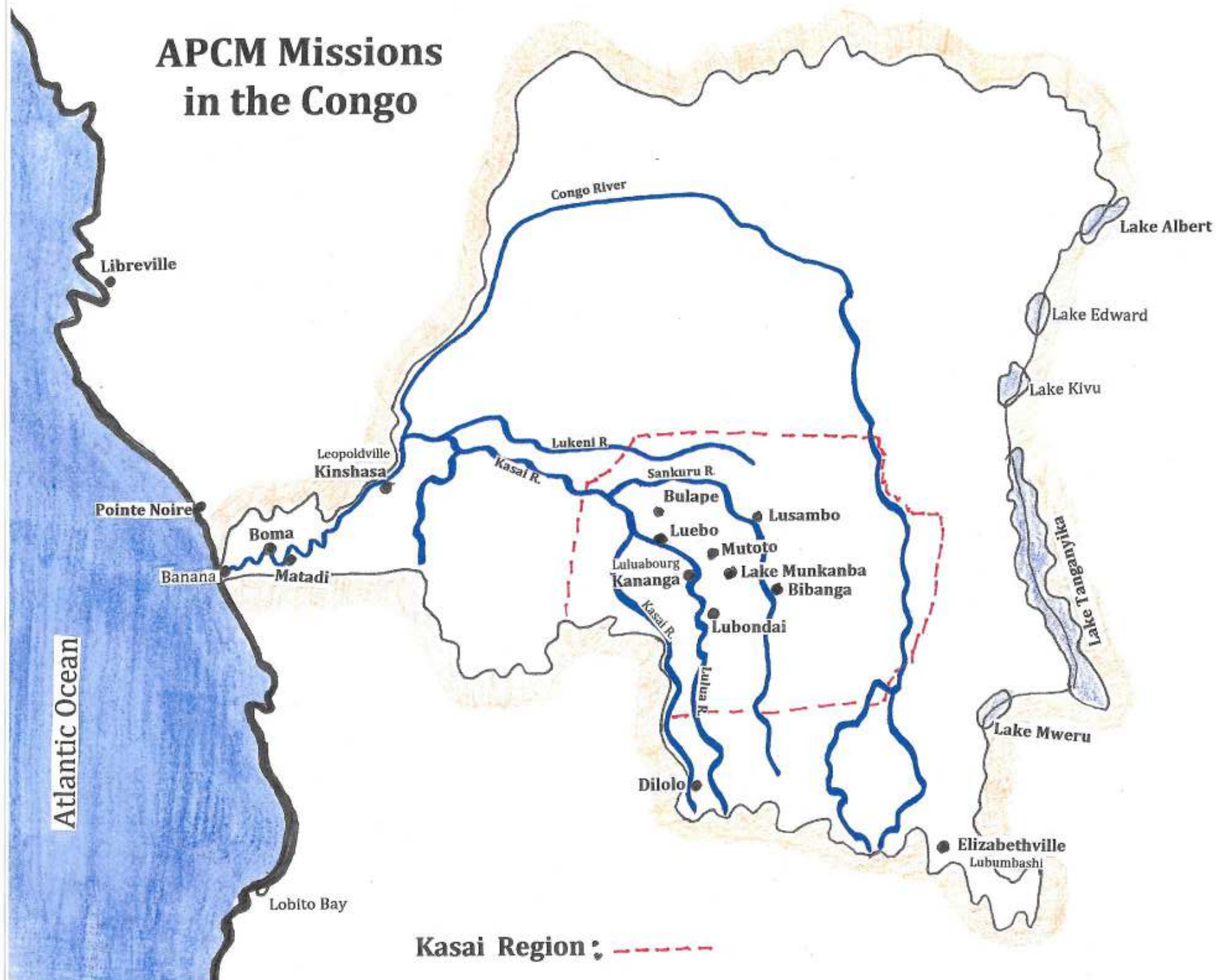


Harriet Louise Crane
1917 - 2006

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APCM Missions in the Congo



Forward

Louise was in her early sixties when she learned how to drive. She had accepted a job as the Director of the African Studies Outreach Program at the University of Illinois in Champagne/Urbana, and moved there from New York City, where she had lived and worked for almost four decades. Louise was an absolute pro at navigating the complicated public transportation system in NYC, but the move to a Midwestern college town created her need for a car to continue her self reliance.

Many of us remember trying to keep up with Louise on the streets of New York, as she herded us on and off the subways and buses to get to the next exotic stop on her carefully planned itinerary for our visit. She would patiently allow us to stop and examine something that got our attention, but then we paid for the interlude with the increased length of her stride as she tried to keep us on schedule, always maintaining a continuous narrative of whatever occupied her mind at the time.

I was disappointed when Louise moved away from the city, never quite understanding how she could move so far from her own comfort zone. She was an incredibly brave and strong woman, and her intrepid venture into the world of vehicular navigation was not surprising in the least. I don't know who taught Louise to drive, perhaps a colleague in the African Studies Program? Whoever it was, however, had nerves of steel and a clear indifference to living life on the precipice of death. I had the dubious pleasure of being in the passenger seat many times with Louise at the wheel, once even on a short trip to the DMV when she was 75 years old and had to get her license renewed. At her age, they required a road test, and I secretly hoped common sense would prevail. She had barreled through at least one stop sign on the way to the DMV, so surely she would repeat this feat with the examiner riding in the shotgun seat. Although he seemed a little shaky as he stepped out of Louise's car after the road test, he apologetically told me, out of her earshot, that she had "technically" done nothing wrong, and he could not fail her. Both of us shook our heads in wonder.

Somehow Louise and the rest of Champagne/Urbana survived her driving excursions, and when she retired in 1987, at age 70, she packed up her little apartment and drove all the way to North Carolina to begin another phase of her life closer to family. She chose Durham because a critical mass of Cranes nested there. I was living in Chapel Hill, pregnant with Cammie, who would be born that December. Carolyn, Ryan, Jenny, and our mother Abie, had all moved to Durham the previous year. In the summer of 1987, we all rented a house at Montreat, and Louise stopped by and joined us on her drive east. I remember thinking 70 was so old, and I was amazed at her energy and vitality. She joined us for hikes, and dinosaur egg (watermelon) hunts in the stream nearby, never stopping the monologue about her work and hopes and goals for retirement. She was excited about life.

Louise lived with us in Chapel Hill until she was able to buy a little house, becoming a homeowner for the first time. The house was in a slightly depressed part of Durham, but home prices were high, and it was affordable. It had 3 tiny bedrooms, one of which she immediately turned into an office. We helped her find some furnishings, and she soon decorated her home with her African things. She was comfortably ensconced.

Louise immediately started working on her book, which we heard about in great detail whenever we dared to ask. I couldn't imagine how she was going to get things written down in a coherent narrative, but she worked doggedly at it, typing on an old processor and producing reams of pages. She spent her days in her little office, reading old letters from her family and perusing old papers and stories from the Congo. She told me that she wanted to write this book for her nieces and nephews, so we would know what incredible people our parents and grandparents had been. She was determined that her family's experiences growing up in the Congo would not be lost with her generation.

Sadly, around 1991, we realized that Louise was having issues with her memory. I married Carl that summer, and we were in a tiny rental house in the woods near Chapel Hill while building a house for our blended family. Louise drove from Durham to spend Christmas day with us, parking her car in the circular drive in front of the house. After we said our goodbyes later that evening, and saw her safely in her car, we closed the front door and were busy getting the kids to bed. Our neighbor, who lived some distance away, called to say that someone was driving off-road in our woods. Fully aware of her driving skills, we immediately knew it was Louise. Apparently she drove off the driveway, was deep in the woods, and she could not find her way out. Carl somehow extricated her car, we all had a good laugh, and we got her safely on the road home. My instincts told me, however, that this incident was the beginning of more challenging times.

For seven years after her move, Louise was able to keep up, albeit in Louise style, with her life in Durham. She never had much interest in the details of house cleaning, but every few months or so, when we could no longer stand the accumulated debris, Carolyn and I would "surprise" her by surreptitiously cleaning her house while she was out. She also knew little about yard maintenance, so every few weeks, along with our kids, we would go over on a Saturday or Sunday and work in the yard. Carl would mow the grass, and the kids had fun with clippers and shears. The kids were great sports about the day, and they had fun together as they "helped" their favorite aunt. Louise enjoyed the buzz of activity in her yard and spent time inside preparing everyone a "meal." These culinary experiences were always an adventure, for all of us.

About 2 years after her license was renewed, Louise had an accident while driving to the store. She had turned into someone, hit his car, and then drove away as if nothing happened. The accident unnerved her so much that she drove straight

home, covered the damaged front end of her car with a tarpaulin, and went inside her house. I got a phone call from the police, who had followed her home and made the assumption that she was driving while intoxicated. I met them at her house, where I found Louise extremely agitated, but completely unaware that she had done anything wrong. The police were very kind when I explained that we feared there was memory impairment. I told them I would ensure she never drove again and seek medical attention. The car was a total loss, so convincing her to stop driving was not too difficult.

We helped her stay in her house as long as she could take care of herself, securing rides to church and to the grocery store. This arrangement worked for six months until we understood that it was dangerous for her to live alone. Moving her into a care facility was the hardest thing I ever did. She was still aware enough to know this move was not what she wanted, and she was very worried about leaving all her papers and books behind. We carefully packed it and assured her she could keep working in a place where she would be safe.

At the time of the move, Louise had completed a rough draft of her book, now titled Ku Mputu. I remember looking at the three binders holding the pages of her book, and wondering if they would be a complete mess considering her memory impairment while working on the project. I didn't read them until this past summer, when I came across them in the container where I stored all her papers. I was so surprised at how well she wrote her story, still a rough draft, and very sad that she was unable to complete this project that was so dear to her heart.

I have only edited the first half of the book. The last half takes her story in a direction that may not be as interesting to all of us in the family, as it concentrates on her relationship and travels with our father, Hank. Drawn mostly from Louise's memories and letters from her family, this story is rich in details about our parents' lives growing up in the Belgian Congo, as well as Charles' very different life in Hickory. We remember Louise's incessant talking about all things African, and her life and work revolved around making Americans more knowledgeable about the country of her birth. I believe that she was frustrated that her family, especially some of her brothers, showed little interest in her efforts and passion, so this book was her way of explaining herself to all of us. In editing the book, I tried to keep Louise's voice. I changed very little, other than to give a little more context to some events that needed more explanation, and I added some pictures that I found in her box of papers. Where letters are quoted, I left them as written and put them in italics.

I am so grateful to Louise for writing this book. I only wish she had been given more time to complete her journey.

Charlotte Crane Zeithaml
Charlottesville, VA
November, 201

Ku Mputu
An African Journey

By
Louise Crane

Introduction

Until I was well into my teens, most of what I knew about “Ku Mputu,” the Tshiluba word for the lands outside Africa, was by hearsay. There were the nostalgic descriptions by my parents – Mother remembering the Catawba River and the magnolia trees blooming in North Carolina, and Dad’s stories about life in his native Georgia. They often reminded my brothers and me about other family members we had in the southern U.S., especially an older brother. For health reasons Charles had been living with Mother’s sisters in Hickory, N.C. since the age of three. Loving as they were, our parents put family second to their commitment...a “call from the Lord”... to serve in the newly established American Presbyterian Congo Mission (A.P.C.M.). Their stories, and those of their missionary colleagues, led my brothers and me to believe that America, especially the southern part, was the center of “Ku Mputu”. But from others who came to what was then called the Belgian Congo, we learned also of the European “Ku Mputu”, whose people spoke French, Flemish, Portuguese and other languages besides English. It was also clear that most Ku Mputu people, at least those known to the Congolese, were white.

None of our African playmates had been to any part of Ku Mputu, but when we were out of earshot of our parents or other adult whites, they did not hesitate to express their rather negative opinions, in Tshiluba of course. According to them Ku Mputu people were weak, both physically and mentally, and they most certainly had problems with African languages. Doubling over with laughter, our friends gave exaggerated imitations of “missionary Tshiluba”. They also pointed out another example of Ku Mputu people’s weakness...their white color.

For many reasons, not least of all the derogatory comments of the Congolese, I preferred to think of myself as African. To be sure, my skin was white, but after all, I was born at Luebo, spoke Tshiluba before I spoke English, and even had a Tshiluba name, Mbombo. My friends assured me that my Tshiluba was as good as theirs. Long before I would admit it though, there were many reminders that I was in fact a Ku Mputu person.

In those days, just following the end of World War 1, when most travel in Congo was by riverboat or on narrow foot trails through the plains and forests, white people were very much a curiosity. Like other foreigners unaccustomed to the harsh climate and rough living conditions, our parents were very dependent on the Africans for help. To travel over land they had to use Congolese porters to help carry their baggage and also to carry them and their children when they were unable to walk. The hammocks in which they rode were suspended from poles across the muscular shoulders of the porters. Generally cheerful about bearing “the white man’s burden”, the Africans greatly enjoyed making a spectacle of it any time we came to a village. Because white children were so rarely seen, my brothers and I

usually attracted special attention. Nearing a village one day, the hammock men carrying my father, with me, a tiny girl, sitting on his lap, began singing and dancing. As they moved rhythmically back and forth, shaking the seed filled rattles on their ankles and wrists, the men called out to the villagers: "Come look at this strange 'muana' (child)," they shouted. "See her white skin scorched by fire, her straight black hair! Look at those eyes!" Then they called out my African name, "Mbombo wa Dibue!" "Dibue" was their name for my father. As hundreds of black hands reached out to inspect me, I ungraciously pulled my sun helmet down over my face.

The brief furlough periods for our parents provided some direct contacts with Ku Mputu, mostly Hickory, N.C., where our brother and aunts lived. While there were many things that fascinated us... soft grass that you could walk on barefoot without fear of snakes, the magical taste of ice cream...there was again the feeling of being different. Our Americanized brother, Charles, was often embarrassed by us, especially when we lapsed into Tshiluba, which he did not understand. He had only a vague idea of our Congo home, and of course knew nothing about our friends there. There were black people in Hickory, but in these days of Jim Crow laws and segregation we had little contact with them. They were not in the schools or churches we visited, or even in homes, except as servants. Those we did meet we quickly found did not speak Tshiluba, and were not particularly interested in talking about Congo.

Most of the Americans we met, of all colors, young and old, thought of Africa as one big country inhabited by animals and savages. For them there was little distinction between the animals and all people living in Africa. One day, one of my brothers, fair, blue-eyed Sid, the least rambunctious of us all, came home from First Grade with a bloody nose and other evidence of recent battle. "They called me monkey-face," he explained.

Presbyterians in Hickory and elsewhere knew a little about the Congo mission, which some of their church offerings helped to support, but their interest was limited. While they praised our parents for their "wonderful work with the natives," they had less interest in the "natives" themselves. Ignoring our parent's own expressions of respect and admiration for the Congolese people, their generally negative image of black people outweighed any consideration that Ku Mputu people might actually learn something from Africans. Thus, for us children, it was impossible to explain to our new friends in North Carolina how much we missed Congo and our friends there.

Even in Congo, however, the education necessary to prepare us for life in America began to separate us from our African friends, especially after the establishment of a boarding school for English-speaking children. The final break came for me when I had to go to the United States to enter college, leaving behind family, friends and the country of my birth. It was many years before I returned.

I know the American Ku Mputu much better now. After years of living and working in other parts of the country, I am back in North Carolina, where I now make my home. But a large part of me still remains in the land of my birth, now called Zaire, and it's surrounding continent, which I have also come to know more fully. My journey between the two continents, physically and spiritually, has been long and often times puzzling and painful. Much of it has been an emergence from the somewhat constricted world into which I was born, where honest relationships between people of different color, religion or lifestyle were often stifled. Good friends helped pull me from the confusion over who I was and where I belonged, but it was a brother who really set me on the path to freedom.

As children Henry (later called Hank) and I were often at swords' points, both of us headed for juvenile delinquency, according to some of our missionary mentors. But our closeness in temperament and common love of Africa drew us more and more together, especially after he returned to work in the Congo mission, the only one of us siblings to do so.

When he got back to Congo in 1950, Hank found a country in fast change, deeply affected by its closer contacts with the rest of Africa and other continents. Ku Mputu people still dominated the mission and the government, but the growing restlessness with the status quo by the Congolese was causing frequent disruptions and questioning of policies. Hank loved it, relishing the opportunity to exchange ideas with some now better-educated Africans, excited about the new spirit of freedom and self-assertion. He grieved over the turbulence following Congo's precipitously granted independence from Belgium in 1960, but his belief never wavered that, after a period of "creative chaos" Africans everywhere would come into their own. His contacts with the rest of the continent, as well as with the worldwide Christian community, broadened during six years as Africa secretary for the World Student Christian Federation when he was based in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Following that, he was Africa secretary for the Division of World Missions of the World Council of Churches, based in Geneva, Switzerland. In both jobs he travelled widely over Africa, coming to know personally many of the present and future leaders of the countries emerging from colonial rule. Our communication during these years was largely by letters, trip reports and some meetings during his brief visits with his family to the U.S. As I lived in New York city at that time during the sixties, I frequently met, or hosted some of the growing number of Africans coming to the U.S. on business for their governments, to the United Nations, church meetings or other purposes. Many of these were people Hank had met somewhere in his travels. Having already drawn on my childhood background to launch some Africa-related publications for American children and schools, I soon realized the need to update and expand my knowledge of Congo and the entire continent of Africa.

In 1969, following several years of consultation with Hank and others, and a number of unsuccessful efforts to secure financial support, I put a large portion of my modest savings into a three-month Africa trip, accompanying Hank on his

assignments for the World Council of Churches. High points of this trip were: 1) Witnessing Election Day in Ghana, the first since the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah. 2) A conference of the All-Africa Council of Churches in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where religious, educational and political leaders from the whole continent were gathered. 3) The return to Congo, including the very moving service in a Kinshasa cathedral, celebrating the admission of the Kimbanguist church into the World Council of Churches. At a World Council of Churches gathering in Canterbury, England, just preceding our trip, Hank had made a persuasive argument for the admission of this church, named for its founder, Simon Kimbangu. In 1921, Kimbangu, a layman attempting to make Christian worship more relevant to Congolese culture, was accused of subversion by the Belgian government and was put in prison. He died there 30 years later, but the church continued to operate underground until the Belgium ban against it was lifted shortly before independence.

The reentry to Africa with Hank was invaluable. As it turned out, it was also providential, because it was his last trip to the continent we so much loved. During the trip Hank was sometimes not feeling well and was irritable, due, we later learned, to a recurrence of the cancer for which he had been operated on two years earlier. Although he shared my enthusiasm for much of what we experienced, especially the marvelous singing choirs and African bands, the irrepressible humor of the Africans, and their warm welcomes, he was often impatient and sometimes needlessly domineering with me. There were good reasons, beyond the state of his health, for Hank to be annoyed with my overly romantic reactions. Through his 19 years of work and travel all over the continent, Hank had never lost his faith in the African people, but he was often disappointed in the slow pace of development after independence.

He knew that, as with Ku Mputu, Africa had its share of unthinking people, content to continue the status quo, as well as the power-hungry, ready to exploit their own people. In contrast to my brother, I was in a period of nostalgia, blind to the realities of modern Africa. In the end, however, we agreed we had much to learn from each other.

“Even if I sometimes make for a stubborn and opinionated partner,” wrote Hank in a letter following the trip, “we must work together. I think a really objective report of Africa needs both the freshness and enthusiasm of your rediscovery, as well as the passion of the long but painful ‘love affair’ that I have had with Africa, if people are going to see beyond the touristic posters to the real Africa that needs to reveal itself.”

We did not have time to work together. In the closing days before his death in Geneva a year later, Hank was dictating aloud, unfortunately without a microphone present, his thoughts for a book he wanted to write about the “freedom” his African experience had given him. That book may still be written some day, including many writings Hank left behind, and contributions from Africans who were his friends and colleagues.

The story of my Ku Mputu journey obviously includes much about the family into which I was born, and is written partly for some of the younger generation who want to know more about our past. I hope it will also have meaning for others, especially those who are concerned about deepening understanding and mutual trust between Ku Mputu people and the people of Africa. Except for a few names that have been changed, the story here is true, as I have seen it through Ku Mputu eyes. Only Africans can tell the rest of the story.

Chapter 1

The Establishment of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission (APCM)

On February 25, 1890, two Ku Mputu men, one white and one black, set sail for the “dark continent” to establish a mission for the Presbyterian Church in the United States. On May 10, 1890, they arrived together at Banana Point at the mouth of the Congo River. Samuel Lapsley and William Sheppard, both in their early twenties, shared a commitment to minister to people they understood to be in dire need, spiritually and physically. However, as they admitted later, their knowledge of Africa at that time was extremely vague. On their way to what was then called the Congo Free State, the two men had stopped in Belgium, where Lapsley had an audience with King Leopold II. At a meeting of European powers in 1885, the Treaty of Berlin had sanctioned Leopold’s “right” to own and run Congo as a private estate. After Lapsley told the king about the American church he represented, and explained the plan he and Sheppard, his black partner, had of “working with a combined white and colored force to help the natives,” Leopold commended him: “The Congo has a future,” said the king. “I cannot believe that God made that great river, with it’s many branches all through the land, for any lower purpose.” Adding some advice about the “danger of drinking wine in Africa,” as well as recommendations for mission sites, the king asked the young American how old he was. When Lapsley told him he was twenty-three, Leopold congratulated him on having begun the “work of Christ” so soon. Lapsley commented later:

I quite forgot he was a Catholic or a king when he spoke with so much apparent sympathy of my mission, and I wonder now how God had so changed the times that a Catholic king, successor to Philip II, should talk to an American boy, and a Presbyterian. (1)

As it turned out, whatever the king’s motives were at that time, his overwhelming greed and complete disregard for the Africans soon resulted in one of the most corrupt and cruel foreign regimes in Congo history. Complying with a worldwide declaration against slavery, Leopold’s representatives in Congo abolished the Arab slave trade, but at the same time they instituted forced labor and military service, subjecting the Congolese people to intense suffering and humiliation. Lapsley did not live to witness much of this, as he died less than two years after his arrival. His good friend William Sheppard, however, was among a number of the American Presbyterian missionaries who brought the atrocities against the Congolese to worldwide attention. Foremost among these missionaries was William McCutcheon Morrison, a Virginian, who came in 1897 to the station established by Lapsley and Sheppard at Luebo, in the central Kasai region of Congo.

Joining an already remarkable group of talented, well educated and dedicated American missionaries, William Morrison quickly stood out. A man of extraordinary ability, including strong linguistic skills, he had originally wanted to be a lawyer. His talents and interests served him well, not only on the mission, but also in his activities exposing the injustices of Leopold's representatives against the Congolese. In 1903, after the king turned down Morrison's request for an audience, the missionary went on to England and America to add his voice to others, giving testimony of the oppression suffered by the people of the Congo. He spent several years writing carefully documented factual accounts, speaking before such groups as the British Parliament, U.S. Congress, and the 13th International Peace Conference in Boston, Massachusetts (October 1904). As a result of the publicity given to the Congo atrocities, the Congo Reform Association was established, first in England in 1903, and then in America the following year. This organization worked actively for the next ten years to stop the injustices to the Congolese people. In 1908, spurred by world criticism, Leopold's unpopularity with his own subjects, and by growing profits from the Congo, the Belgian Parliament forced King Leopold to relinquish his sovereignty over the Congo Free State. The country was then annexed to Belgium as a colony.

The change to a Belgian government did not immediately bring about all the reforms needed. The rubber companies, and others that had served as Leopold's agents, still had their special privileges, and expected to conduct business as usual, ignoring the charges of exploitation of the Africans launched by the reformers. Both before and after the annexation to Belgium, because of his leading role in exposing the cruelties of Leopold's regime, William Morrison had become a target for retaliation. In 1909, on the pretext of "false charges" against them in a short article by William Sheppard in a newspaper edited by Morrison, the Compagnie Kasai (a rubber company) launched a libel suit against both men. At the trial in Leopoldville, Emile Vandervelde, a distinguished Belgian lawyer, who was a strong advocate for Congo reform, defended Sheppard and Morrison. Vandervelde refused to accept a fee for his services. At the end of the trial, both men were completely vindicated. Only a few days after their acquittal on October 4, 1909, the Belgian Parliament announced a series of reforms planned for the Belgian Congo. Much of the successful outcome for the trial was attributed to the brilliant defense lawyer, Emile Vandervelde, but William Morrison's conduct was also highly praised. Included in the many tributes to him was one by the famous British author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:

Dr. Morrison on trial at Leopoldville stood as a nobler and more perfect representative of Liberty than the statue by Bartholdi in the harbor of New York City. (2)

In spite of such distractions, Morrison was a major factor in the growth and development of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission (APCM), which had, at the time he arrived, less than 50 converts to Christianity, and no outstanding Congolese leaders. One of the American missionaries wrote of him:

Perhaps the highest tribute that can be paid Dr. Morrison is to record the simple fact that, almost from the time of his arrival on the Mission, his fellow missionaries accepted him as the natural leader and administrator of the Mission. This was not because he was aggressive and sought high position, but rather it was their spontaneous tribute to a great missionary of Christ. In a very real sense, he was the father of the Mission, and many of its methods and policies reflect his wide visioned leadership. (3)

Most important was his popularity with the Africans. Morrison's success in helping to settle a dispute between two different ethnic groups earned him his name, "Kuonyi Nshila," meaning, "don't let the path get closed again." Despite his many duties, he made time every day to visit the Congolese in their village homes, sitting and talking with them in a friendly way. After his untimely death in 1918 from tropical dysentery, tributes to William Morrison came from all over the world. Typical was this one from Dr. S.H. Chester, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of World Missions in the United States:

We believe there would be universal agreement that Dr. Morrison was the greatest of modern missionaries in Africa, ranking with Livingstone, and Moffatt and MacKay of Uganda in ability and consecration, and in the scope and influence of his work. (4)

Bishop Lambuth, of the U.S. Methodist Church, gave Dr. Morrison credit for what he observed during his visits to the APCM:

There is a vigor about this mission, an air of progressiveness and a statesmanlike quality in all its plans, that synchronize with the life and administration labors of the man who gave 21 years of unremitting toil and sacrifice to build it up. William Morrison died young. He was not fifty-one. But he lived much. (5)

When my parents came as newly weds to Luebo, in 1912, Dr. Morrison was their neighbor. As with all the new, young missionaries, he was a revered teacher and friend. But, for our family, his influence and the significance of his work lasted long after his death. Pointing to the portrait of Morrison that hung in our home, my parents often reminded me that I had been baptized by Dr. Morrison, implying that this was something I must live up to. The mission training school my father headed, and in which my mother also taught, was named Morrison Bible School. Even Mutoto, the station where our family was based most of the time, was named for Morrison's wife, whose Tshiluba name was Mutoto, meaning, "star." Mrs. Morrison died at Luebo in 1910, just 4 years after their marriage.

Our family's most important connection with the pioneer missionary, however, was the involvement of our father, throughout his 40 years of service to the APCM, in activities closely parallel to and following up to, those of Dr. Morrison. These were especially in language and literature development, in education, and to some extent in dealing with the external legal affairs of the mission. For our parents, and many

others following them, Morrison's literary legacy and the mission policies he lay down, were fundamental to work and to relations with the Africans, fellow missionaries and with the Belgian government.

Perhaps Morrison's most far-reaching accomplishment was the rendering of the Tshiluba (then called Buluba-Lulua) language, for the first time, into writing. Starting with a small dictionary of only a few hundred words, and still carrying on a great many of his regular duties, he produced a 417-page grammar and dictionary of the Tshiluba language. This book, completed in 1903, laid the foundation for language training of missionaries, Peace Corps volunteers, and others working in the Kasai region of Congo today. In the introduction to the grammar, Morrison gives special credit to the "native lads" who helped him, including in a list of names one who had spent over a year with him in America. He also mentions, by name, some girls who were "most helpful." Concluding the introduction, however, Morrison warns that the book is only "intended as a guide and a help to wider and deeper study of the language." Citing his frustration over inability to find Tshiluba words for abstract terms like "love," and for expression of religious ideas, he states:

Perhaps as our knowledge of the language grows, we may discover terms for some of these ideas. (6)

With the casting of the language into an accurate written form, the way was open to produce literature, in Tshiluba, for the Africans. This could now be printed on the new mission press, named for J. Leighton Wilson, the first Presbyterian Foreign Mission Secretary. Wilson had earlier been a missionary in West Africa, so had a special interest in the development of the APCM. Some of Morrison's first projects included a simple catechism for teaching the Christian faith, some Bible stories, and scripture paraphrases. He also started a translation of the Bible. By 1916 he had completed translation of the Gospels and Acts, and the first edition was printed. That same year, T. Chalmers Vinson, another missionary with language aptitude, was assigned to help Morrison. For nearly two years, up to the time of Morrison's death in 1918, the two men worked closely together on the Bible translation. Vinson then completed the translation alone, and in 1926 the first edition of the entire Luba-Lulua Bible came off the press of the American Bible Society. A missionary at Luebo described the arrival of the first Bibles, brought to the mission in boxes carried by a "noisy caravan." Mikobi, a young African boy helping her open the boxes, shared her excitement at unpacking the first "sturdy, cloth-bound, beautifully printed book, the long expected Luba-Lulua Bible." When the missionary placed the Bible in Mikobi's hands and told him that it was "the entire word of God in your language," this was his reaction:

He gazed at her unbelievably a moment, then asked, "Does it have every word, verily, verily, that is in your Bible from the foreign land?"

"Every word, verily, verily," she answered.

The lad no longer looked at her, but far out and above the palm-crowned hills. Huskily he whispered as he folded the book reverently to his breast, "Tuasakidila;

twasakidila wa bungi.” “Thank-you; thank you very much.” It was not the missionary he thanked.

Neither Vinson nor Morrison was there to see the Bible in the hands of the Congolese, Vinson having been forced by family illness to leave the mission in 1923. But, as the missionary quoted above commented, “In the Luba-Lulua Bible, they left a worker far more efficient than any man.” Editions of the Bible by both the American Bible Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society went far beyond the borders of the APCM. In later times, the teams of qualified missionaries, including our father, and Congolese working long years on a revised edition, were astounded at the quality and degree of accuracy of the original Morrison/Vinson translation.

Among other Morrison contributions of lasting importance were the guidelines he set for missionary policy, covering external and internal relations among the Ku Mputu people, as well as relations with the Africans. In regard to the Belgian government, noting that Belgians might regard Americans as “abrupt and uncouth” because of their more straightforward manners, he advised the missionaries to conform to Belgian social customs, even if they seemed “effusive.” On official matters, he especially recommended “keeping cool,” complaining as little as possible, and being always sure of the facts. In relation to Catholic missionaries, closely tied to the government and often at odds with the Protestants, Morrison advised extending the same courtesies as to government officials, never returning any insults. It was especially important not to involve Africans in the Catholic/Protestant conflict, and he wrote:

We must teach our converts to be forgiving and not strike back. Never repeat gossip in the presence of the Congolese. We ought to encourage our followers always to pay their taxes. Neither request, or make use of special privileges from the government at all! (7)

First President of the Congo Protestant Council, Morrison also urged his Presbyterian colleagues to minimize differences between the various denominations. Aware of the problems that could arise both with the home church and on the mission, through uninformed and thoughtless comments and opinions, he advised new missionaries to withhold all criticism until after the first year, and to be careful at all times in writing home, even to relatives. “Never pose as a martyr,” he said. Included in many suggestions for maintaining physical, spiritual and mental health, he listed allowing time for recreation, for an occasional party, and for reading:

Read some each day, books on missionary activities, especially on the Congo, as well as for diversion. Keep in touch with world movements, social questions, etc. Read good biographies and subscribe to a few good magazines. (8)

Known himself as preeminently a man of prayer, William Morrison stressed for his colleagues the importance of setting aside time for personal spiritual renewal:

You are constantly giving out to others, and you must be vigilant to keep your spiritual life from declining. There will have to be agonizing, prayerful thought during the hour kept sacred each day. Do not take the rest hour at midday, for this ought to be kept as sacred for physical rest! Take your daily Quiet Hour as early in the morning as possible, for this will give you peace, repose in God, and strength for the rest of the day.

In regard to the Congolese, Morrison urged sensitivity, trying to understand the local customs, and above all patience. "Don't ever try to hustle Africa," he warned, "It simply can't be done."

If we laugh at their customs, appearance or fetishes, we destroy their confidence in us and repel them. Greet them with a pleasant word, and do not fear to shake hands with them, even if they may appear to be somewhat untidy. Palavers - any kind of quarrel, dispute or contention - offer us the opportunity of showing our interest in the people, and of demonstrating the Bible principles of right and justice. But all of this has to be done very cautiously. Do not usurp the authority of the chief, or let him get the impression that you are trying to do so. Use native proverbs and folk parables whenever possible, for they are singularly rich in material with which to illustrate religious truth. Give daily instruction to those who wish to know more about the plan of salvation, and desire to become Christians. Remember that the church is a training school in which Christian character is developed. (9)

Unlike so many foreigners coming to "develop" or "teach" Africans, Morrison was particularly concerned about not prolonging dependency of the Congolese on the outside "helpers". In keeping with this policy, in 1900 he organized a Christian Workers Society, his objective being to develop initiative and confidence in the timid converts. Out of this society eventually grew the several Bible schools, and the large body of Congolese leaders scattered throughout the Kasai territory.

Chapter 2

Charles and Louise: The First Journey

Charles LaCoste Crane, of Decatur, Georgia, had completed almost 4 years toward an engineering degree at Georgia Tech University, when a “call” to full time Christian service led him to switch to a B.A. course at Davidson College in North Carolina. After graduation from Davidson in 1908, he went to Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. There, tall, dark and handsome Charles met small and pretty Bessie Louise Dixon, one of the very few women students at the seminary. Louise, from Hickory, North Carolina, had graduated from the Women’s College of the University of North Carolina (now UNC Greensboro), and then taught school for several years, before deciding she wanted to train for Christian service. She was especially interested in the work begun by the Presbyterian Church in Korea. Charles, at that time, was considering applying for appointment to the new Presbyterian Mission in Belgian Congo.



Bessie Louise Dixon, circa 1911

Our parents may have edited the version they gave us of their courtship, within the confines of an ecclesiastical institution, but they did make clear there was little frivolity. According to our father, much of their time was spent on drilling each other on answers to questions in the Presbyterian Catechism, a document all too familiar to us from our early childhood training. Coinciding with their attraction to each other was the discovery of their mutual interest in working in a foreign field. It took little persuasion for Louise to change her focus from Korea to Charles' first choice, Belgian Congo. Their decision to marry and apply together to the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board was kept secret, at first, from all but very close friends. Among the reasons for delaying a public announcement was some consideration for another seminary student who had a romantic interest in Louise, unrequited by her, but hoped for by him. More important, however, was their concern for family reaction. The Dixon family, in particular, would inevitably feel great anxiety over Louise going to the "dark continent," with a man they didn't know. Charles sent assuring letters both to her widowed mother and to an older sister. He wrote:

Even before I knew that I loved her last fall, I could not think of her going alone without having a desire to protect her. The climate in Africa is trying, of course, but we shall be in the hands of Him who called us to go there.

Receiving acquiescent letters from the Dixons, the young couple was overjoyed, and soon news of their plan was out. We never learned what happened to the disappointed suitor, but assume he recovered. On December 19, 1911, several months after their graduation from Union Seminary, and after Charles' ordination as a Presbyterian minister, Charles Crane and Louise Dixon were married in Hickory. Appointed by the Foreign Mission Committee of the Southern Presbyterian Church, to the American Presbyterian Congo Mission (APCM), they set sail from Philadelphia for the Belgian Congo in February 1912. It would take them three months to reach Luebo.

Before they left on the boat to England, Charles and Louise had talked with the Motte Martins, an APCM couple on furlough, who planned to join them for the second lap of the long boat trip, from Antwerp, Belgium, to Matadi, Belgian Congo, at the mouth of the Congo River. The Belgian steamers only sailed every three weeks, and usually took 6 weeks to reach the Congo. Because the Martins were delayed in leaving the U.S., the Cranes stayed in London a little longer than planned, but made good use of the extra time. They did some sightseeing, studied French, and tended to arrangements for baggage, supplies and the equipment needed for their life in Congo. Through a British man, who had been a friend of the mission since the first trip by Lapsley and Sheppard, the APCM had engaged a London agency, The Whyte-Rydsdale Company, to deal with supply and shipping needs, including those of the individual missionaries. They helped Charles and Louise buy kitchen utensils, beds, mattresses, chairs, clothing, food and personal effects, all items unavailable in the Congo. All invoices were charged to the Foreign Mission Board in the States.

While the couple was in London, some events of worldwide interest were taking place, described by Charles in a letter on March 4, 1912, to his father in Georgia:

Practically all the miners in the British Isles are out on strike, and some of the miner unions have also struck out of sympathy. The train service is somewhat paralyzed, factories have shut down, and quite a large furor has been created in some sections. So far, the men have been quiet and no serious disturbance has occurred. The Suffragettes though, have stirred up everything on their foolish questions. The day we arrived, the same day the King opened Parliament, we saw them immediately behind the procession of the Royalty, with their backs placarded, "M.P.s, remember your pledges!", and Louise was muchly shocked. They broke out on a rampage the other day in the Strand, and threw stones and hammers at the shop windows, breaking quite a number. The women in the U.S. are bad enough about their so-called "Women's Rights", but the English women, as you may judge from my remarks, are far worse. If the simpletons were contending for something really worthwhile, one would have some sort of sympathy for them; but I have not a particle of sympathy for them in this movement...

Letters written from the S.S. Leopoldville, en route to Congo, reflected further concern about international conflicts, some relating to the country to which they were headed. Charles wrote:

Everything, according to the various reports I can gather, is in confusion just now, on account of the international disputes between the European powers, and you do not know when some foolish law will be passed to spite England or Germany. I was much surprised to learn that the Belgium government does not actually own the Congo; But King Leopold was made the proprietor of it by the other powers, and taking advantage of the international jealousy between them, at the same time claiming that he had spent his fortune on it, and it was his by virtue of this fact, simply grabbed it. One of the Frenchmen on board claims that the Belgians are afraid to commit the atrocities there that used to go on, because the others will take it away from them. But he is far from being correct in his statement if I am to believe the testimony of every Protestant missionary I have talked with. Some of these have told me that Catholic priests, State officers and traders treat the natives very cruelly indeed, even now... Of course I shall see for myself when I get to the Congo. We are nerving ourselves for most anything, as we are told that we shall have to do so. I may find it more discreet to keep all such to myself when I have gotten there. Mr. Martin tells me that they have reviled him at a great rate.

A veteran of nearly ten years with the APCM, Motte Martin provided valuable orientation to the new missionaries travelling on the Belgian liner. Besides our parents, there was also Thomas Arnold, a West Virginian, going out to lend his business skills to the mission. Although there were no Africans on board, the daily contact with Belgian crew and passengers introduced the Americans to the habits, social customs, and political policies of the government people to whom they would be responsible in the Congo. As indicated in Charles' letter to his father, there was

already a confrontational attitude between the Catholics, closely associated with the Belgian government, and the Protestant missionaries and their Congolese adherents. Even on the boat, Arnold, described by my father as something of a clown, was joking to the other Americans about the “big feet” of the Belgian priests on board. This kind of rivalry, sometimes rising to open conflict, continued for many years.



S.S. Leopoldville 4, 1910-1914

There were a number of port stops along the voyage, the first two on the African coast being at Dakar, in present day Senegal, and then at Grand Bassam, first capital of modern Cote D'Ivoire. Because some of the usual stops were eliminated, this trip was cut from the anticipated 6 weeks, to only three weeks, from Antwerp to Matadi. At the crossing of the equator, the Belgians held an elaborate ceremony to initiate those who had not crossed before. With “King Neptune” presiding, the neophytes, including the new American missionaries, were subjected to face lathering with flour paste, cold water dunking, spraying with high smelling cologne, and other rather juvenile treatment. The men got it worse than the women. According to Charles, Louise escaped most of it, possibly “because the Belgians did not understand English, and Louise did not understand French.” In later years, when we children observed the Neptune ceremony on the Belgian liners, we felt a bit cheated for not getting the initiation, because we had been born on the wrong side of the equator!

Finally, on March 26, the muddy waters surrounding the ship signaled the imminent arrival at the mouth of the great Congo River, second only to the Amazon in the volume of water it sends over a hundred miles out into the Atlantic Ocean. Soon the boat arrived at Banana, the first Congo port. In a letter to friends and family in the USA, Charles described his first impressions of the country that was to be their home for many years:

We arrived at Banana, at the mouth of the Congo, on March 28th. This is a most beautiful island, formed by the mud and silt of the Congo River. It is covered by coconut palms and tropical foliage, and has been made very pretty by the Belgian government. At this point quite a few of the natives came aboard with their food and cooking utensils to use in preparing their food for the rest of the trip, for all vessels take them on here to use in unloading at Boma and Matadi.

We saw the Congo life in reality then, and were entertained in the early morning by loud chattering and the noise of the crew bossing them around. They took smoked fish off of a stick they were carrying, pulled them in pieces, and put them in a wash basin in which they had mixed a concoction of red peppers and dirty water. This, with some sort of white concoction resembling dough, formed their food. One thing, very striking, was their unselfishness in dividing everything they have, and Mr. Martin says that this is always the case. If one of the passengers threw them a piece of bread or an apple, they divided it with each other immediately.

Another surprising fact was their love of bathing, which seems to be a natural habit. One little boy that we saw at Matadi was standing under a pump while his mother poured water over his head and shoulders. I remember what a time they used to have in bathing me when a child. Here was a little African baby, not two years old, taking to the water like he would to a bottle of milk...

After we left Banana, which was as soon as the tide would permit, we had one of the most beautiful trips imaginable. The trading posts all along the river presented quite a pretty contrast to the wild growth on each side, and we were not out of site of trading posts the entire route. The Congo River itself is by no means the least of the sights, with its whirlpools, sandbanks and immense volume of water. We arrived at Boma on the same day that we left Banana, March 28th, and left there on the 30th, so we had plenty of time to see the capital of the country. The Belgians have made it very beautiful, with asphalt pavings, concrete buildings and palm trees, but when you see how they make the poor wretches, who have committed real or trumped up crimes, work on these improvements, you lose some of your interest.

The final stop of the ship, at Matadi, was on March 30th, exactly two months from the time the Cranes had left Philadelphia. There was still another month of travel before they reached Luebo.

Between Leopoldville and Matadi, on its way to the ocean, the Congo River narrows and falls through a number of cataracts in deep canyons, making the river

unnavigable. A train journey, of one and a half days from Matadi, bypassed the cataracts and the Cranes arrived at Leopoldville for the next stage of their journey, which would be up the Congo River on the APCM steamer, "Lapsley". In Boma, Matadi, and an overnight train stop in Thysville, missionaries of other denominations, some from England and Sweden, entertained the Americans. In Leopoldville, Captain Scott of the "Lapsley", and Methodist Bishop, Lambuth, who had travelled down from Luebo with Scott, met them. Lambuth was just returning from a trip in the Kasai region, where, accompanied by Dr. Morrison and others, he explored possible sites for a Southern Methodist mission. While they would in no way consider any kind of cooperation with the Catholics, the Presbyterians welcomed the association with fellow Protestants. Commenting on the prospect of having Methodists as neighbors in the Kasai, Charles wrote:

We are so glad to have the Methodists in that section, as ours is the only Southern church at work out here, and we have no nearer neighbors than the ones here at Leopoldville, 800 miles from us. The "Lapsley" will be used jointly by the two Societies, and we are hoping that the Methodist Society will make it possible to use the river the whole year round by the purchase of a small steamer that can go into parts of the river where it is too shallow for the "Lapsley" to be used. It is a glorious thing to see these two churches, so widely separated as regards theology, working together as we shall soon be.

Especially in the APCM area where there were, as yet, no trains, motor vehicles or roads for them, river transport was essential for moving both passengers and cargo. Thus, there were practical advantages to the interdenominational cooperation. The river steamer Charles and Louise were to board was actually the second "Lapsley", named for the co-founder of the APCM, Samuel Lapsley. The first "Lapsley," funded by contributions from many Americans, built in a Richmond, Virginia shipyard, and reassembled in Congo, had been capsized in a whirlpool in the river less than 2 years after it was launched in 1901. Mr. Vass, the APCM missionary who had reassembled the steamer when it came to Congo, had warned that it was better suited for American rivers than for the Congo. Based on lessons from this experience, which cost the lives of a missionary and twenty-three Africans, the second "Lapsley" was designed to cope with the peculiar dangers of the Congo River, and was built on the River Clyde in Scotland. A Scotch engineer also assisted with the reassembly in Congo. "Lapsley II" proved both efficient and safe. The mission captains and their African crews were not only skilled in handling the boat, but also knowledgeable about the seasonal changes in this area of the Congo, which affected the depth of the river. The dry season ran from May through September, and the rainy season from October through April. Whirlpools and sandbanks could often appear without warning.

When they arrived at the Leopoldville docks, the Americans were met by the African crew of the "Lapsley," some 45 men and boys from Luebo and along the river, "so glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Martin that they almost jumped over each other to shake hands with them and say "Muoyo." The Tshiluba greeting of "Muoyo," meaning

“Life,” is often used with “webe,” or “your,” “Muoyo webe,” in essence, means “Life to you,” or “A good life to you.” In a letter home, Louise wrote enthusiastically about the Africans and the trip up the river:

You can't imagine how much we are enjoying our Lapsley. We feel almost like we are on a private boat. It is small, but very comfortable, with one double cabin, two single cabins, and Captain Scott's cabin. Mrs. Martin and I have the double cabin, opening up into the bathroom. Charlie and Mr. Stevenson are in the single cabins, and Arnold and Mr. Martin sleep on the deck. The boat has to stop every afternoon for the night, and then we stop for Sunday. The river is too uncertain to run at night, and the men have to go out and chop wood for the engine every night. The native cooks, under Mrs. Martin's direction, give us good “chop,” and we surely enjoy having things cooked our way, after the rich Belgian cooking on the other boat...

There are about 50 natives on board, and every morning, about 5:30, they have prayers before the boat starts. Then, after breakfast, the cooks and table boys come up and Mr. Martin has prayers with them. He usually calls on one of the boys to pray, and, while we cannot understand what they say, we are told how well they do. They pray for us, that we may soon learn their language and teach them. It is tantalizing to be unable to talk to or understand them, and we will be so glad when we learn a little more. We are studying, but progress seems a bit slow. It has been too hot to really bend down to hard work on it, though we study every day.

Sunday morning Mr. Martin preached to the whole crowd, and after service nearly all of them came up to shake hands with us. Then we walked out onto the beach to see the footprints of elephants and other wild animals. The evening service, when the natives all gathered around a campfire and had one of their numbers preach to them, was so impressive.

At one of the villages along the river, an APCM-trained Congolese had established a church. Charles was most impressed:

One of our native evangelists is working here, and quite a healthy growth has started, though this point is not less than 600 miles from our station. The church members came on board last night and Mr. Martin preached to them. All of us were seated on the upper deck, the white people in chairs and the natives on the floor, and my how they sang the hymns we gave out! What a wonderful change, too, has been wrought in their lives when, 600 miles from the center of our work, they are worshipping God and living cleaner and more consistent lives.

Although, before her marriage, Louise knew that home-making in Africa would be different, little did she realize then, how much she would have to draw on her own resourcefulness. Even while on board the Lapsley she started confronting family needs with imagination and determination. In a letter home she wrote:

I started making Charlie a tan mercerized cotton suit last week, and have finished the coat except pockets. We will make the trousers when we reach Luebo. We found, when we got to Leopoldville, that our cargo, including most of his tropical suits, couldn't come up for 6 weeks or longer, and as he had only three cotton suits with him, he needed more. A native tailor made a white suit for him, but it wasn't a great success, so I told him I'd try my hand. The coat really fits and looks fine, though I had to make my pattern over another coat, and it wasn't very easy. Still, he seemed proud of it, and that is all I wanted....

I tried my hand at light bread yesterday, and it is pretty good, considering the yeast and everything else. By the way, if it isn't too much trouble to you, won't you send me your recipe for potato biscuits? We have sweet potatoes out here, and your biscuits were so good I want to try them. I'm not the experienced cook that some of my family are.

Our whole trip has been just the loveliest imaginable. The country is beautiful, especially just now at the close of the rainy season, when everything is lovely and green. We have seen hippos, crocodiles, and an antelope, and have enjoyed the good tropical fruits: limes, paw-paws, guavas, rubber tree fruit, plantains (much like bananas), etc., so it really isn't hard to realize that we are really in Africa. The paw-paw is very much like cantaloupe and is delicious. They are plentiful at Luebo too, and very healthful, they say. The inside of the rubber fruit looks much like strawberries, and is very acid and nice.

Louise joked a bit about her husband and the other men trying out their rifles. "They look fierce but are very harmless with their guns," she said. Charles' own comments indicated his reluctance to kill animals:

We have seen numbers of hippo in the water, but I am afraid to say, we did not kill any of them, or get a chance to, as they are very shy and stay in the water all the time. The native crew boys got hold of some fish at one of the places we stopped, and the whole steamer has been smelling like a funeral ever since. I don't know what we would do if we killed a hippo, as they always bring the whole thing aboard. Mr. Scott shot an elephant in self-defense the last trip he made. The beast was making for the steamer, and one of the boys hit him over the head with a flaming log of wood he pulled out of the furnace of the engine. It killed a goat on board, and undoubtedly would have killed some of the natives, but Mr. Scott shot it in time. The State gave him only ¼ of the value of the ivory. The whole thing, as they claimed, was valued at \$140.00.

On the first day of May 1912, when the Lapsley finally pulled up to Luebo, there was a huge crowd of Africans and missionaries waiting on the banks, singing and waving. As the passengers came ashore, the crowd surged forward, hundreds of hands reaching out with greetings, "Muoyo! Muoyo webe!" Dr. Morrison and others of the APCM staff were there to welcome the group, and translated exchanges between the new missionaries and the Congolese. As the excitement died down, everyone

started walking up the hill toward the mission station, the Americans followed by African porters carrying their baggage and cargo from the “Lapsley.”



Riverboat Landing at Luebo



Road up from the river at Luebo Landing.
The State Post is visible on the opposite side of the river.

It was a day to be remembered forever by Charles and Louise. Overwhelmed by the warm welcome of the Africans, delighted with their missionary colleagues, and by the beauty of their surroundings, they were eager to share as many details as possible with the folks at home in the States. In the following excerpts from Charles’

letter, his mention of a “tabernacle” refers to the open shed-like building of the Luebo church, a temporary type of building they used until a more permanent structure could be built:

I think I shall enclose a map showing the mission station... As you come up from the river, you have to climb a steep hill that finally lands you on top of a ridge that must be at least 100 feet higher than the river (which is about ¼ mile away from us). Our house is to your right, and from it you get the prettiest view by far on the mission. We can stand on our side porch and see the hills, and Louise is reminded of the mountains in Hickory. The scenery is so pretty, and the whole mission is the prettiest place we have seen in the Congo. The tabernacle occupies the central position, and the buildings are grouped around it in a quadrangle. The brick house was built for Dr. and Mrs. Morrison, as he is the oldest missionary, and the Legal Representative of the Mission, the place of greatest prominence in the eyes of the State Officers. Since her death it has been occupied very little, but while Mr. Morrison is on furlough in America, Mr. Coppedge and his wife will occupy it. The Mission will gradually build brick houses for all the missionaries, as the brick ones do not need repairing so much, and are somewhat more healthful. All the other residences are made of mud and sticks: but this does not convey to you a good impression, so I shall say that they look very nice indeed, and are very cool. They are made by standing poles up in the ground, and binding smaller sticks to them for the skeleton. Then they are plastered with the red mud first, and then finally whitewashed with a native whitewash that is very white indeed. The roof is made by sewing the leaves of the palm with the native fiber, “lukodi”, and putting these on the skeleton. The house resembles a bungalow, with the low roof coming over the plaza, which completely surrounds the house. The floors are made of mud, packed until it forms a platform about four feet high...



Residence under construction

As with all the missionary houses at that time, the kitchen area, where cooking was done on a piece of sheet iron spread over an open fire, was at the back of the house, separated by a porch. Washing was in tubs in the back yard, with water hauled up a steep hill from a nearby spring. The water, both for laundry and for baths, was heated on open fires in the back yard. Over all, the missionaries were far more comfortably accommodated than those who had come earlier. Sheppard, Lapsley and others had lived in tents. When he came to the mission in 1897, Morrison built his 12 by 15 foot house himself, out of mud, sticks and grass. "Pretty close quarters," he remarked when he finished, "but more than my Master had."

To take care of all the household chores, the new missionaries had a large number of "house boys," ten or more at the Cranes, including a cook, wash jacks, sentries for day and night, yard people, and other assistants, some of them small boys. There were also three women who hauled the water up from the spring in earthen jars balanced on their heads. Since Louise's family in Hickory had never had servants, she was not accustomed to giving out orders, especially in Tshiluba. Even with the help of a Congolese, who knew a little English, she found it difficult to communicate with the cook, so their meals were a constant "surprise." Speaking of the cook, she said, "He brings in some things we had not known of before." Although Charles' family had some domestic servants, he was at first shocked at the size of the staff provided for missionary homes. After several weeks of living at Luebo, however, he wrote:

When we first came we thought it absurd for the missionaries to have so many servants, but we have wondered now how they get along with so few!

Referring to the Congolese, he added:

They have been brought up to live in idleness, and to work only when they feel like it... So we have not gotten as much work out of the whole crowd as we might get from one good man at home. The mission bears the expense of nine of these, so we do not have to pay more than a dollar a month ourselves. It takes very little to make these people happy; a picture, or a peacock feather, makes them as happy as a gold piece would make one of the children at home. So when we gave these boys a cheap blanket to sleep on in their house they were overjoyed... They have so little, and it takes so little for them to live... They think that all of us are very wealthy because we have larger houses, and live in more decent style than their biggest chiefs. We have to be on guard to keep from giving them too much, for they get worse if you grant even one of their requests. They worry us for soap, candles, bottles, and thread more than anything else.

At this time, Belgian currency had not come into full use, so payments for services were made in a variety of other ways, such as, cloth, rock salt or the cowry shells, traditionally used for trade, and still considered legal tender. Especially popular was the sturdy white cotton cloth called "mission cloth," because it was kept in large supply by the APCM.

Regardless of declared and written mission policies advocating non-judgmental attitudes toward the Congolese, language barriers and inexperience with any foreign cultures, added to their southern background, made it difficult for the young Americans to let go of their prejudices and stereotypes of black people. At least for the time being, the Africans, far more curious about the ways of Ku Mputu people, than were the Ku Mputu people about theirs, cheerfully accepted their role as servers and students. As indicated earlier, many of them had become Christians. They not only found a belief in a Supreme God (Nzambi, or Nvidi Mukulu, in Tshiluba) common to their traditional religions, but also responded to Christianity's message of love, freedom from fear and a more personal relationship to "Nzambi." The Congolese also found many practical benefits in the association with the missionaries, not only the material things, but especially the opportunity for western style education. Thanks to Morrison, Vinson and other early missionaries, the Presbyterian Church's historic emphasis on education had been launched vigorously on the APCM, with the establishment of the printing press and production of literature in Tshiluba. Everyone at Luebo was learning to read and write. As indicated by a missionary's description of the Luebo Sunday School, the Africans were quick to pick up not only the religious instruction of the missionaries, but some American culture as well:

These people are great at memory work, and the best way for them to get anything is to memorize it. Thus, these 900 people in Sunday school can be heard from some distance away as they repeat at the top of their voices the answers to the questions. And sing! Well, you ought to hear them! Our songbook contains some 200 hymns, and every native within 10 miles of Luebo seems to know them all by heart. All you have to do is start them off, and they know the rest. It is a common thing to hear groups of natives from several different parts of the village singing at night these religious songs. I have passed several boys in the path, as I went about, whistling "Dixie" to a fare thee well!

In spite of some paternalism on the American side, many genuinely affectionate relationships developed between the missionaries and the Africans. As they grew closer to the Congolese, Charles and Louise also began to understand and appreciate their culture. According to custom, Louise had been given an African name, "Mama Luse," or "Mama Compassion." "Mama" (Mother) was the title for all missionary ladies, as was "Tatu" (Father) for the men, however young they might be. As Charles wrote, there was more deliberation about the selection of his name:

We are so fond of all our boys, and feel that we are blessed in having such a good crowd of them...not the number...but the kind. They are so responsive to your efforts, and are so full of fun you can't help loving them. They called me "Mulunda Muimpe", (Our Good Friend), but as this is a rather general name, they have changed it to "Luhehele," (or Wind), with the idea in it of a person who will not stop for anything, like the wind. The name was really given me by one of the men who works for the mission whose name is the same. He took a liking to me and wanted me to have his name. I must explain here that the natives always give the missionaries and State

officers native names, because they cannot pronounce the foreign names; thus, Dr. Morrison is "Kuonyi Nshila," (Opener of the Road), Martin is "Mpanda Nshila" (Escaper from Danger, because he was rescued from the wreck of the Lapsley), and many of the other missionaries have similar names. They try to give you a name that describes some outstanding trait of character, and whenever any new trait, which seems to fit you better, develops, they change your name. My name was given to me, however, without any apparent design, except that the old fellow who named me wanted me to be his "Xakena," "namesake." I wish you could have seen him strutting up and down and shaking hands with glee, because the people accepted the name that he gave me. DeYampert (another missionary) said that he would not have exchanged places with the King of England. The State officers get names like "Nguvu," (hippopotamus), or "Ngandu" (crocodile).

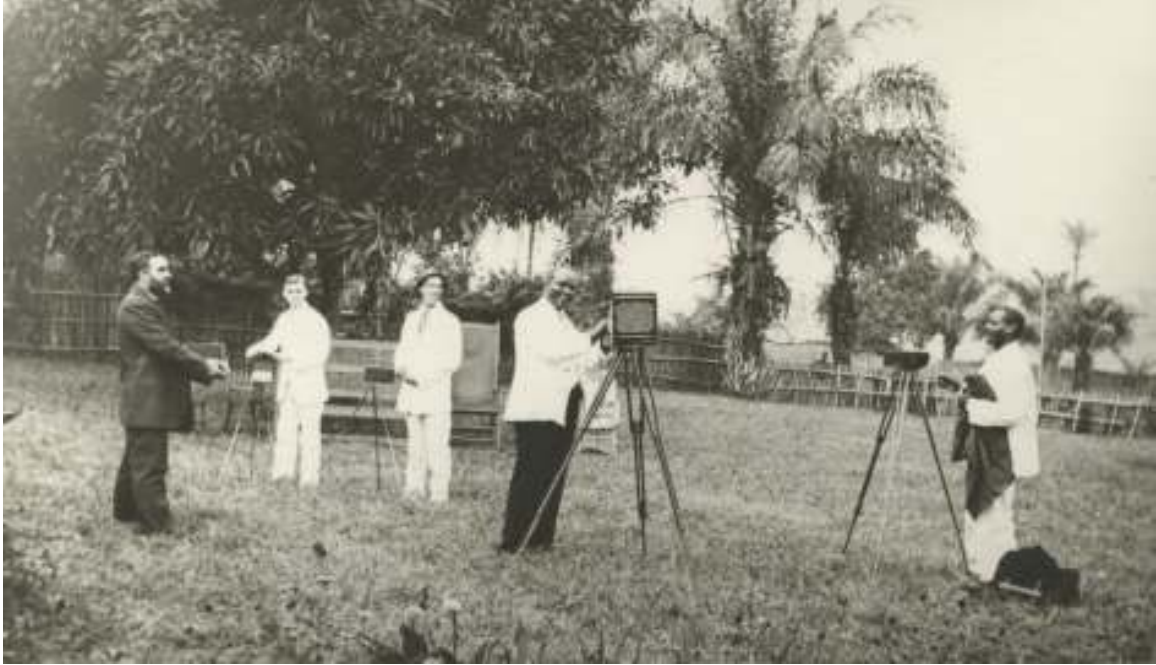
Eventually, possibly after he left Luebo, Charles' name was changed to "Mulundu Dibue," or "Friend like a Rock," often shortened to "Dibue," "Rock." The generic name for all State officers was "Bula Matadi," or "Breaker of Rocks," relating to the first foreign explorers who broke up the slate boulders around present day Matadi, to make paths into the Congo. "Bula Matadi" is still the name today for government officials.

Regarding their missionary colleagues, Charles wrote:

I agree with Bishop Lambuth, that it is the nicest body of people I have ever seen... Dr. Morrison has captivated Louise so, that I am beginning to take a back seat...

Besides Dr. Morrison and the Martins, there were the DeYamperts, a black couple from Alabama, and Dr. and Mrs. Coppedge, also from the southern U.S. Dr. Coppedge was the only trained medical doctor on the mission, which by 1913 had opened other stations at Mutoto and Lusambo.

While still settling into their house, Charles immediately began helping at the printing press to relieve Morrison, so he could get off for a much-needed furlough. Within the year, Charles and James Allen, another newly appointed missionary, started a special training school for evangelists at Luebo. The school was later to bear Morrison's name when it was moved to Mutoto in 1918, after Morrison's death. Like Charles, Louise soon had enough command of Tshiluba to join in the education program, working especially with women and girls



Missionary men at Luebo setting up a photo session.
Left to Right: Dr. Morrison, Mr. Setzer, Charles Crane, Mr. Edmiston,
Mr. DeYampert

On April 8, 1914, almost two years after their arrival at Luebo, Louise gave birth to a little girl, whom they named Frances Dixon. She was a pretty baby, much admired by the Congolese, few of whom had ever seen a white child. Lenoir and Roy Cleveland, a newly arrived couple staying at the house just across from the Cranes, took special interest in Frances and her parents, because they too were about to have their first child. Lenoir wrote in a letter to her family in Texas:

Mrs. Crane, and little Frances Dixon, are both getting along as nicely as can be. She is perfectly lovely, and the baby is strong and pretty.

This began a long association of the Crane and Cleveland families. Some years later, the Cleveland's younger daughter, Anne Boyd, married the Crane's third son, Henry (Hank). In her letter home, Lenoir added a note about the help she and Roy were getting from Charles:

Mr. Crane began giving us Buluba (Tshiluba) lessons yesterday morning. He is a splendid teacher, and if we do our part we certainly ought to learn.

A little over a month later, Lenoir gave birth to a daughter, and there was rejoicing in both the Crane and Cleveland households, as well as excitement among the Africans. Eula May, like Frances, was both healthy and pretty.



Missionary ladies with their babies at Luebo, 1914
 Back row, left to right: Mrs. De Yampert, Miss Fair (nurse), Mrs. Setzer,
 Lenoir Cleveland, pregnant with Eula May.
 Front row: Samuel De Yampert, Louise Crane with Frances,
 Mrs. Edmiston with Alonso, Mrs. Stevens with Neal.

For the Cranes, however, the joy was short-lived. After developing normally the first six months, Frances suddenly became very ill with an intestinal obstruction. Dr.

Coppedge and Miss Fair, a newly arrived trained nurse, worked over the baby for three days, but were unable to save her. In later years our parents often spoke to us of little Frances, whose photo had a prominent place in our home. The only written record we have of their reaction, in 1914, to this family tragedy, is a copy of Louise's letter to two friends at Lusambo, Grace Sieg and Lenoir Cleveland. The Clevelands had moved to Lusambo very recently. In her letter, Louise gave her friends some details of the three-day ordeal, including the burial of Frances in "a little white box covered with lovely pink roses" (arranged by Miss Fair, the nurse). Describing the difficulty in transmitting the news to her family in Hickory, Louise wrote:

It was hard, too, to tell them the cause of her death, for Papa died with the same trouble. Still, I'm glad the climate didn't cause it. Dr. Coppedge can't account for the obstruction...

Throughout the letter, Louise spoke of the comfort and support received from fellow missionaries, especially her husband, and from the Africans:

I never knew what prayer was before, nor did I know what a husband I have. Dear, big, tenderhearted old boy, he is such a tower of strength...Pray for us that our faith and self-control may continue, and that the going Home of our Darling may mean the

salvation of many of these darkened souls...The natives have been so considerate and quiet. They prayed so hard, too, for they loved our little sunbeam...

Although the Clevelands had Eula May for a little longer, they too lost their first-born to the Spanish Flu epidemic, when she was only 4 years old. Many of the APCM families suffered such losses of spouse or children, often attributed to the climate, harsh living conditions, mysterious tropical diseases and inaccessibility to proper medical care. Frances' death was not caused by any of these, but, in following years, our family had its share of health problems.

Charles Jr., born in July 1915, while the Cranes were on furlough, had a series of problems that continued until after I was born at Luebo two years later. By the time Charles was three, the doctors were convinced he could not survive in the Congo climate, and advised his parents to send him back to live in America. It was a terrible blow for the couple, deeply devoted to both their children and their work. As related by a fellow missionary, Charles first suggested that they return together to America. There was the possibility that, as other missionaries with similar problems were doing Charles would then come back to Congo alone, leaving Louise and the children in Hickory indefinitely. But it was Louise who made the final decision, saying to Charles, "You and the work need me here." And so it was, that three-year-old Charles Jr. was sent in care of Mr. and Mrs. Stegall, a Luebo couple going home on furlough, to be delivered to Louise's family in Hickory. Here, her mother and three sisters nursed him back to health, and made a permanent home for him in the United States.



Louise with Charles, Jr., aged 8 weeks



Louise with Frances

Despite the difficulties of these early years at Luebo, life for Charles and Louise had its carefree and happy moments, especially when they were able to join their missionary colleagues in social activities. On one occasion, the Cranes and six other people were guests at a formal dinner party at the Cleveland's home. Writing her family in Texas about it the next day, Lenoir Cleveland gave a detailed account of the four-course dinner, served up in elegant style by her "boys...good as gold," and of their activities after dinner. After dinner, the party moved to another house where there was a piano, and "sang a little and played 'Going to Jerusalem'." Wrote Lenoir:

We had heaps of fun- made me think I was at home again at a league social....We practiced a quartet for this morning: Mr. Crane, tenor; Mrs. Setzer, soprano; myself, alto; and Dr. Morrison, bass. We sang "Nearer my God to Thee" at the service this morning. The natives seemed to enjoy it ever so much.

Another time, again before the Clevelands left for Lusambo, the entire Luebo missionary force went on a picnic to the mission farm, several miles down the Lulua River. Mr. Edmiston, an agriculturist from Alabama, and Mr. Hillhouse, another industrial missionary, had recently started this farm especially for the missionaries.

Writing home about the outing, Roy Cleveland described their first experience riding in hammocks:

After a big feast we started home about dusk as the parrots were flying to roost. The moon came out bright and was high by dark. Our hammock men seemed to be in special good humor. Picture Lenoir and little Eula in a hammock carried by two big strong natives, myself following just behind in another hammock, and two extra hammock men and our three house boys in the rear with loads upon their heads, all singing as they followed the moonlighted path. You get some idea of what we were enjoying. The natives never work together without some kind of music to set the gait. Sometimes it is more like college yells, but it is there all the same. When they row a canoe across the river they set up a monotonous chant, or else one of them will beat the side of the boat with a stick to set the speed limit. What do they get for carrying a hammock? They think 6 francs a month is very good, with rations of course.



Hammock Travel

The missionaries also had some social, as well as official, contact with Belgians, especially those at the State Post across the river from Luebo. Just north of the Post, on land given them by the Government, the APCM had established a sub-station, "South Luebo," with a missionary home, church shed, and a school for Congolese within walking distance. The frequent personal contact the resident missionary couple, Mr. and Mrs. McKinnon, had with the State officials, greatly enhanced the mission's diplomatic relations with the Government. On at least one occasion, Catholics and Protestants were able to joke together about their differences.

McKinnon and George McKee, a colleague visiting him from Mutoto, were both invited to a banquet, provided by the District Commissaire, in honor of the Governor General, who was there on an inspection visit. At the banquet, a Catholic priest was in the seat of honor at the Governor's right, with the two missionaries seated beside him on the other side. In front of each place there was a champagne glass. As both missionaries turned their glasses bottom side up, to indicate they did not want to be served the "strong drink," the priest turned to them and said, "You fellows don't know what you are missing." Without the slightest hesitation, George McKee asked the priest, "Why did you not bring your wife here to the banquet as the other officials did?" Taken aback, the priest stammered, "Why, you know that a priest cannot have a wife!" "Father, you don't know what you are missing!" said McKee. Everyone at the banquet laughed heartily.

Besides the social occasions, which were reciprocated, without wine, by the Luebo missionaries, there were other non-official contacts between the State Post and the mission station across the river. Coming from church one Sunday morning, the Cranes, and Clevelands, with a group of other missionaries, found a State soldier standing at the gate, holding a pole on which a long notice was attached. It was an announcement of an auction to take place that morning, of the possessions of a Compagnie Kasai (rubber company) man who had died. This was the procedure used by Belgian administrators in the case of the death of a European where there was no Will. Money from the sale of personal effects would be sent to the family. There was a question among some of the missionaries about the actual disposition of the money, some believing that it might be going into local pockets.

The main contact the Americans had with the outside world was through mail from family and friends in the USA, a few shared newspapers, and wireless messages that came into Luebo nearly every day from Leopoldville. As anxiety grew over the brewing world war, Dr. Morrison sent letters to missionaries at all the stations warning them to be very careful in writing home. Some mail was already being censored. Morrison emphasized that it was extremely important for the missionaries, as American citizens, to maintain the neutrality declared by their country.

When Charles and Louise returned from their first furlough in 1916, the French liner on which they were travelling had darkened portholes to avoid detection by lurking German submarines. Two other missionary couples were on the boat with the Cranes, including Dr. and Mrs. Eugene Kellersberger, going to the Congo for the first time. Charles enjoyed kidding Eugene about his obviously German name, suggesting this could cause him trouble when they reached the port stop at Bordeaux, in France. Instead, it was Charles who was held for questioning for several hours, because of his middle name, LaCoste, derived from his French Huguenot ancestry. There was an alarm out for a certain spy by the name of LaCoste. Kellersberger was ignored completely.

Few of the Africans from the Kasai were sent as soldiers in this war, but the Belgians did send many as porters to German and British East Africa (modern day Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya), and to German Cameroon, (now part of Cameroon). When the Congolese finished their service, many of them came back crippled, and infected with an unusually virulent strain of dysentery, which in 1918 and 1919 spread into an epidemic all over the country. This dysentery, and an equally deadly epidemic of Spanish influenza, swept into the APCM territory. William Morrison, the revered leader of the mission was himself struck down by dysentery in March 1918.

In February 1918, the Conference of Protestant Missions in the Congo, which Morrison had helped to organize, had its quadrennial meeting at Luebo for the first time. Morrison, who had been elected President at the last meeting, presided. One of the APCM representatives attending the conference noted that Morrison presided with "ease and great ability," and called the occasion, "an unforgettable experience." Immediately afterwards, the APCM annual meeting began, also at Luebo, with delegates from the other stations attending. Morrison's illness, diagnosed as dysentery, began the third day of the APCM meeting, but under doctor's care he appeared to improve. After the meeting was adjourned, the visiting delegates returned to their stations. Within a few days, however, Morrison's condition became critical. His colleague, Vinson, described the last days:

Constant prayers went up to God from the missionaries and the natives for his recovery...On Wednesday of the following week the crisis was reached. All work in the mission was stopped, and the entire day was devoted to prayer and fasting.

But Dr. Morrison had literally worn himself out by twenty years of unrelenting toil, and had no reserve strength with which to battle against such a disease. At 1 o'clock on the morning of March 14, 1918, the silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl was broken and his spirit returned to God who gave it. He was unconscious when the end came, recognizing no one, and leaving no parting message. There was no struggle; he fell quietly to sleep, having just reached the summit of the great divide between middle life and old age.

William Morrison was not yet fifty-one years old. His sudden passing stunned everyone, especially the young missionaries who had depended so much on his leadership. For those who, like Charles and Louise, had known him as both friend and mentor, it was a time of deep sorrow as well as reflection about carrying on his legacy. Their six years with Dr. Morrison at Luebo had a profound influence on both Charles and Louise, personally and professionally. As their spiritual guide and friend, he had seen them through their family sorrows - the death of Frances, the separation from Charles Jr. - as well as happier occasions. Dr. Morrison baptized me less than a year before he died. Most important for the young couple, especially for Charles, was the opportunity to work alongside him to develop the educational program for the Congolese. Charles came to the mission possessing both interests and particular abilities, such as linguistic skills, which could contribute significantly to the work begun by Morrison, Vinson. However, it was the chance to consult with,

and observe the senior missionary on a daily basis, that matured Charles, giving him direction for the tasks at hand and for the future. As Morrison himself frequently reminded fellow Americans, all of them, he included, had much to learn about and from the Africans. He urged patience, respect, and nurturing, but not dictating their development. Although our parents were never entirely free of the paternalism that prevailed in varying degrees on the APCM, up to the time of Congo's independence in 1960, they were among the few who genuinely believed in the development of the Africans to their full potential. They also became more open than many of their contemporaries to African ideas and opinions.



Charles and Louise with Charles Jr. and baby Louise, circa 1917

Chapter 3

Mutoto

In late 1918, when I was a little more than one year old, our family moved to Mutoto, a mission station about 160 miles east of Luebo. The Morrison Bible School (MBS) had been relocated there, as it was more central to the APCM territory. The move was marked by a number of trying events. The flu epidemic had reached its height, taxing the APCM medical staff beyond capacity as many Africans and missionaries were afflicted with the disease. There were a number of deaths among the Congolese, including students at MBS. I had begun to walk, but after the illness hit me I had to learn all over again. In the middle of it all, the second son in our family, Sidney Dixon Crane, was born. In keeping with the times, the Africans named him "Malu Malu," or "Trouble Trouble." Somehow we all survived.

Mutoto station was a beautiful place, settled in a grove of tall palm trees and overlooking a range of low hills. Dr. and Mrs. Morrison had selected this site in 1910. In the station's grass and flower-covered center, a small star-shaped cemetery held the grave of Annie Kate Rochester, first wife of A. A. Rochester, colleague of my father at the MBS. As at Luebo, the missionary houses at Mutoto surrounded the octagon-shaped compound. At one end, a path led down to the temporary buildings for the MBS, which included a church shed and the student village. The mission hospital was built on a nearby hill, to serve the general area, including the small Lulua village called Kankalenge.

Except for a very short stay at Lusambo in 1921, where our brother, William Henry (Hank) was born, Mutoto remained our family home for more than thirty years. We did change houses several times, finally moving to one closer to the MBS. This house, where my fourth brother, David Alford, was born in 1927, was made of brick and had a corrugated tin roof. Papaya, guava, grapefruit, lime and other fruit trees grew in the backyard, and a large mango tree stood in front, some branches hanging over the roof. The mango tree became, for us children, a favorite place for climbing and building tree houses. Palm trees lined the path in front of the house leading down to the MBS.



Crane House at Mutoto

The Morrison Bible School (MBS), which our father headed, was the central APCM training school for evangelists, drawing some 200 all-male students from all over the mission. An attempt was made at first to include Bakuba students, but this proved impractical because of language and cultural differences. The course of study at MBS covered four years, admission contingent on having completed the regular course offered in the day schools (covering up to about 7th grade level). Most of the students were married and brought their wives and children with them. Because graduates of MBS were expected to be leaders in their villages, they were given training in such subjects as agriculture, carpentry and handicrafts, in addition to the theological and educational courses. All students were required to work three hours daily on the school farm, learning agricultural methods and raising their own food.

Usually not as advanced as their husbands, the wives of students needed special training, so a Women's School was established and headed by our mother. This provided basic education as well as training in practical subjects like nutrition, child-care, sewing and other manual skills. From the beginning, circumstances forced all the APCM missionaries to do things they were not trained to do. Now, the expanded curriculum and plans for the MBS required missionaries who were specialized in the various subjects, as well as those who could construct the permanent buildings needed at Mutoto.

In addition to the missionaries who would, like our parents, spend most of their time at MBS, there was a need for others to carry on the general work of the station.

The hospital, Day School, and two boarding schools for youth, a Girl's Home and a Boy's Home, all required staffing. As at all the stations, there were missionaries who spent most of their time in outlying villages, holding services and consulting with mission-trained evangelists. Thus, the Mutoto missionary personnel, which continued to expand through the years, included a diverse and interesting group of people. Among these were two black couples, Mr. Rochester and his second wife, both from Jamaica, and Mr. and Mrs. Edmiston from Alabama, who had also been at Luebo for a while.

The Edmistons, who had been on the mission since 1902, were transferred from Bulape especially because of the need for Mr. Edmiston's agricultural expertise at the MBS. The addition of Althea Edmiston to the Mutoto force was a tremendous boon, not only to the MBS, where she taught in the Women's School, but also to other station work. An extraordinarily energetic and versatile woman, Mrs. Edmiston had produced a grammar and dictionary of the Bakuba language, during her stay at Bulape, while also working full time in the schools. At Mutoto, in addition to her work at MBS, she supervised the Day School for ten years, and took over responsibility for the Girl's Home several times when missionaries in charge were on furlough. Both at Bulape and Mutoto she often donned a nurse's uniform to help with the medical program. She had no medical training, but learned from the mission doctors (Dr. King at Mutoto), how to give lumbar punctures (for sleeping sickness), intravenous injections, and to prescribe and administer medicines in use for malaria and other common diseases. On several occasions, when there was no medically-trained staff available, Mrs. Edmiston had sole charge of the hospital. With all of this, she found time to be a wonderful and loving "grandmother" to me and other missionary children at Mutoto.



Mutoto children wearing their pith helmets. Louise is on the right.
Possibly Sid on the left, and Mesu King in the middle. Circa 1920

As in our family, the Edmistons had health problems with their children. Their first-born son was sent to live with relatives in the US. They managed to keep their second son with them for a few years, but sent him home too when he was still a young boy. Aside from health problems, missionaries with school-age children were faced with the difficulty of providing them with the kind of education that would prepare them for life in America. There were several families with children of, or near our ages, at Mutoto. In particular, the families of the medical doctor, Dr. Robert King and his Belgian wife, of Mr. and Mrs. Plumer Smith, and of Mr. and Mrs. Hoyt Miller. But in the early years, because of furlough interruptions and other factors, the children were taught separately in their homes by their mothers.

Some of the mothers used correspondence courses, such as the Calvert system, which provided ready-made teaching guides and textbooks. In our family we had the advantage of our mother's teaching experience, and the high priority both our parents placed on education. A major lack for all of us was the scarcity of reading materials in English, which, in our home, consisted of a small collection of mostly adult level books, a subscription to National Geographic and several church periodicals. Newspapers, which arrived infrequently, were circulated around the station.

Among the many hours of religious instruction we children received, especially on Sundays, quite a few focused on memorizing answers to the questions in the Presbyterian catechisms. In our family it was considered a disgrace not to have successfully recited, at one sitting, both the Child's Catechism and the Shorter Catechism, before the age of twelve. As expected of all Presbyterian children, I completed the first feat at an early age, and reported my accomplishment in a letter to Mr. Converse, editor of the U.S. Presbyterian journal, "Christian Observer." I asked him to print my letter in order to "surprise my grandmother" in Hickory. I didn't really know my grandmother, but she was duly surprised.

Although we were able to rattle off the answers to the catechism questions, our theology got a bit confused with the more tangible life around us, particularly the goats who were in the back yard. Instead of the correct answer to the question about the Trinity, "The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," my brother Sid insisted on saying, "the Father, The Son and the Holy Goats." I, too, had some difficulty in comprehending the unseen. Severe thunderstorms, with lightning strikes, were all too common occurrences, and they terrified me. Our house was supposedly protected by lightning rods run into the ground, but the frequency of nearby hits was not reassuring. When the crashes came and lit up our rooms, I ran to the protection of my parents, paralyzed by fear. "Don't be afraid," mother would say, "God will take care of us." "But I want someone with skin on!" I replied, burying my head in her lap.

The oldest daughter in the King family, called by her African name, "Mesu" (Eyes), was the only American girl my age, and we were not particularly congenial. Her brother Robert and my brother Sid were good friends. While we spent many of our

after-school hours with the King children and other missionary children, we also played a great deal with the Congolese children. Picking up cues from our parents and their colleagues, we were inclined to be somewhat bossy with the Africans, taking advantage of their interest in our material things. For a spoon of salt or a piece of soap we could persuade a playmate to push our wagon, fetch a mango off a tree or do something else we wanted. Hungry for companionship of my own gender, I organized "meetings" with the African girls, in imitation of those my mother had with the women. When the girls failed to appear, or had activities of their own in which I was not included, I felt left out, realizing more and more that I was "different." The Congolese children were generally very polite, especially in front of our parents, but we sometimes heard them snickering among themselves, making derogatory comments about our skin, our eyes, our nose, or the way we walked. Earlier, the hammock men and other Africans had called attention to my white skin, straight dark hair cut in bangs, my face and eyes shielded from the sun by a large pith helmet. It was another matter, however, to be ridiculed by the children I wanted to be my friends. Admiring their grace, their scantily clad bodies polished with palm oil to a high gloss, I felt ugly by comparison.

One day, when I was six years old, I took measures to make myself more acceptable. In the privacy of our bathroom I removed all of my clothes and covered my whole body with dark orange palm oil. Then, with a towel wrapped around my waist, I sauntered forth barefoot, imitating as well as I could the graceful walk of the Congolese. Before any of my friends had a chance to admire me, however, my horrified mother stopped me short. She was upset less by my grotesque color, than by the fact that I was "naked," a bad example to the "natives." One of our burdens as missionary children was that from the time of our birth, we were expected to be little missionaries, "witnessing to the natives."

My attempt to change my skin color was only one of a number of efforts to improve on what nature gave me. Being the only girl in a family of four boys, I was constantly reminded of things I couldn't do because of the alleged limitations of the female gender. My brothers teased me incessantly about things I didn't do the "right" way because I was a girl, such as climbing a tree or throwing a ball. Because of my sex, I was excluded from hunting trips and other more exciting adventures. From somewhere I had heard that it was possible to change from a girl to a boy, or vice versa, by kissing your elbow. After I tried and failed that exercise, I turned to an African solution. According to the Baluba, having a chameleon spit on you could effect a change of gender. These ugly creatures, called "lungonyonyo," were readily available among the trees at Mutoto, and, although I normally shunned them, it was worth a try. I found a chameleon slowly inching along the branch of a tree. Trembling but determined, I moved beneath the creature and waited for the miracle to happen. With his hideous little body and bugged out eyes, lungonyonyo continued his slow move across the branch, changing his color as he went. But spit he would not!

After that I resigned myself to my lot, and eventually discovered that there were real advantages to being a girl. Actually, since my mother's instructions on sex was limited to "birds and bees," with few specifics, my knowledge on this subject was practically non-existent, greatly affecting my reaction to something that happened to me when I was only 6 years old. The son of one of the black missionaries, about 12 years old, pulled me under a bed one day, pulled down my pants and lay on top of me. "This is how they make babies," he explained. In a few minutes he let me go.

I was terrified and deeply puzzled. Introduced to the word "adultery" in the seventh of the Ten Commandments, I had a vague idea that this was one of the sins the missionaries were particularly concerned about, commission of which led to the removal of names of Africans from the church rosters. But, what frightened me the most was the possibility that I would soon have a baby. I was too scared to talk to mother or anyone else about it. It remained a secret, one I bore for several years, still waiting for the worst to happen. Later, I did learn a little bit more from some of the African girls about the physical aspects of sex and having babies, but there was little enlightenment from either my parents or other missionary mentors.

Directly, or indirectly, we learned about other behavior considered sinful, especially the consumption of alcoholic beverages. European beers and wines were not available in the Mutoto area, but some locally brewed concoctions, like palm wine and liquor made from corn, caused some intoxication among the Congolese. Despite the fact that we children had rarely, if ever, seen alcoholic beverages of any sort, we were familiar from our reading with such names as wine, beer, rum and whiskey. One day, when I was rummaging through a bathroom cabinet, I was shocked to see a bottle labeled "Bay Rhum." In spite of the different spelling, I was convinced by its alcoholic smell that it was some of that wicked stuff hidden away by one of my parents. Some time later I learned that it was an aftershave lotion used by my father, and not for drinking. "That which cheers, but does not inebriate," was a phrase my father often used jokingly, referring to coffee, which he much enjoyed. To amuse our African helpers he converted the phrase phonetically to sound like Tshiluba: "Chidi chicherio kadi kachena chinibrieto." "Chidi chicherio" became our household word for coffee.

One of the chief duties of the sentries guarding our house was to ward off prowlers, especially the leopards which came in sometimes from the valley forests, attracted by the goats we kept in our backyard. One day, a young African boy who had been playing with us at Mutoto, was attacked and killed by a leopard as he made his way home to Kankalenge. A few days later, in broad daylight, probably the same leopard made a raid on our goats, very close to where Henry and his little friend, John Miller, were playing. Our father described the events that followed, in a letter home:

Well, we got that leopard. At least we hope we got the one that ate so many goats and killed the boy. The rascal grabbed a goat from our back yard, and within 300 yards of the house, and the goat boy saw him and ran down to me. We followed him up into the forest where he had dropped the goat and run away for a while. It is always their

habit to kill a thing, suck the blood and leave it for a while, then come back and eat it. So our sentry, Lusambo, and Kabengele, the houseboy and I, waited for him for a long time. Two other natives came up shortly afterwards and I left them on guard while I went to get dinner. Miller had his dinner and went down to watch, but we finally concluded that he wouldn't come while the wind from us was in his direction, and decided to set a trap for him. This we did with my gun, a 250-3000 Savage rifle. We put the barrel through a native mortar (a hollowed out tree trunk) boring a hole in the bottom and putting the barrel of the gun with the head of the goat tied to it, a string reaching back to the trigger in such a way that when he pulled it the gun would go off in his mouth. It worked splendidly. We had hardly got back to the house when we heard the gun go off. I had left my shotgun elsewhere, and had nothing to arm myself with but a broken shovel, but I took this along in my excitement. Miller, however, gave me a pistol as we got to the forest, and he had his Winchester rifle. There was no need of either, for the leopard was about done for when we got there. He had his head in his forepaws but was still alive. I shot him in the head for safety's sake, and Miller gave him one with the Winchester, so he was a dead leopard in a few minutes. The natives went wild with excitement when we called them to get him out of the brush. He was a great big male, big enough to carry off a man, weighed roughly 110 pounds, and measured 6 feet from his nose to tip end of his tail. The skin is a beauty, and I hope I can preserve it well enough to take home with us...Miller really fixed the trap as he knew more about it than I did, but it was my gun that did the work, so he very graciously gave me the skin.

If this is the beast that killed that native boy, we have much to be thankful for. He was getting bolder and bolder, and undoubtedly would have caused the death of somebody else if we had not gotten him in time. We felt easier about our children too.

For the Congolese, the leopard, known as "Nkashama," was an animal with divine power. No ordinary person dared sit or stand on a leopard skin. Only a Chief, when he took his oath of office, would stand on a leopard skin, assuring subjects of his honesty and power to rule. The skin of the leopard Dad shot covered a couch in our living room for many years, but few Africans who visited ever sat on it.

Most Congolese at least paid their respects to "bakishi," ghosts or spirits, though some laughed about them and, especially in front of the missionaries, pretended they no longer believed in them. Spirits of long departed ancestors came to dwell in animals, birds or trees. There were good and bad "bakishi," but you could never tell when one of them might get angry. When a person defied an ancestral taboo, or failed to make the proper sacrifice dictated by the village diviner, the "bakishi" might kill his child or strike his house with lightning. As missionary children we were taught to dismiss the native beliefs as superstition, but it took only one "buadi" appearance at Mutoto to persuade us of the "bakishi's" existence. The "buadi" we saw was a tall creature on stilts, with the head, arms and legs of a human being, but a body completely encased in animal skins. Masses of palm raffia waved wildly through large slits, teeth gnashing fiercely inside a cavernous mouth. To the

hypnotic beat of a drum, the “buadi” swayed ominously toward us and we fled in terror. This certainly was no mere man!

Much of what we learned about African culture came through the servants in our home, especially Tshilombo, a wonderful storyteller. On rainy nights we sat listening to him spin out the “nsumuinu,” traditional folk tales of the Baluba. Settled cozily around the fire in our living room, while the rain pattered outside on the tin roof, we felt the “bakishi” beside us as Tshilombo’s voice droned on, sometimes making clucking or sucking sounds. His eyes rolled far back in his head as he called forth the spirits of Nkashama the leopard, usually the bad guy in the stories, the little antelope Kabuluki, or Kabundi the weasel. Kabuluki was usually the good guy, while Kabundi was generally the trickster who got his way by devious means, sometimes winning and sometimes losing.

Tshilombo did not confine himself to the traditional Tshiluba tales. Whatever came into his mind he would weave into a story. Out of earshot of our parents, he particularly loved to tease us about the inferiority of white people. He took great delight in our vehement protests, when he declared solemnly that Nkashama, Kabundi, or whoever, was very strong, “MUCH stronger than your father!” When we began sharing some of our lessons in American history with Tshilombo, we told him all about King George III of England, who was so mean to the American colonists. Soon after, “Kingi Chochi” began appearing in the “nsumuinu.”

“Kingi Chochi was a very strong man,” Tshilombo announced, as if we were learning about him for the first time, “MUCH stronger than your father!” “No, no!” we would shout. But only when he saw Dad coming into the room did Tshilombo back off from what he had said.

Kabengele, quiet and gentle in contrast to Tshilombo, had started working for our family as a small boy at Luebo, and had been Charles, Jr.’s chief nurse. He still asked about “Dibue Muana,” “Charles the Child,” so our parents often shared with him the letters and photos they got from Hickory. One day, when Kabengele saw Charles, Jr. in one of the photos, with a bandaged toe, he became quite concerned. “What happened to Dibue Muana’s foot?” he asked. Mother assured him there was nothing to worry about so he seemed satisfied. We children had a special affection for this man, and when our brother David was born, everyone agreed his Tshiluba name should be “Kabengele.” Mother taught Kabengele how to use a sewing machine, and he became an expert tailor, making clothes for Dad and the boys. Later on he set up in business for himself as a tailor.

The outside world encroached frequently on the APCM, as the colonial administration expanded its development of the transport system into the Kasai. There was special interest in the rich deposits of diamonds and copper here, not only by the Belgians, but also by other foreign entrepreneurs. While putting this region “on the map,” as Charles wrote home in 1919, the type of “civilization” introduced had its problems:

Two agents for the Katanga copper mines were at Mutoto recently. They were recruiting natives for these mines, which are employing the Baluba and Lulua natives in our section by the hundreds. The mines are near Elizabethville and natives from all over Central and Southern Africa are gathered there. A railway has already been built up to within 2 weeks of our station at Bibanga, and the prospectors are pushing operations fast. Within 3 or 4 more years they will probably be within less than one week of Bibanga. That means our missionaries will probably be able to take their vacations at Victoria Falls or Johannesburg, or anywhere in South Africa, that they wish. But what a fearful problem is now before us. Every time I hear of the progress of civilization in this country, I pray that God might hasten the church's progress to cope with the problems involved. Already, the influence of these copper mines is such as to destroy the morals of hundreds of the native employees. Cape beer and whiskey are sold them, whereas they cannot obtain intoxicants, that is foreign intoxicants, in Belgian Congo.

The increased accessibility to motor and rail travel provided definite advantages for the work of the APCM. Even the Mwanza Ngoma River, always a problem for travellers because of its treacherous currents and unreliable bridges, was being made passable. Charles wrote:

The State had sent an officer here to put through the motor road, and so we have sent every worker and student we could get our hands on to work on it today, and have dismissed the Bible School for a day or so. He has perhaps 2000 natives at work on the part between Mutoto and the Mwanza Ngoma River, about 6 miles distant. He intends to bridge the Mwanza Ngoma with a rude bridge. As soon as this is done we shall be able to travel to Luebo by automobile or motorcycle in one day: and also to Lusambo, as he intends joining this route with the road to Lusambo. I shall be glad to get through with our part of it, as it has been a lot of trouble to me as the Legal Representative of the station to see that the natives respond to his call. Yesterday he threatened to burn down some of their houses because the occupants ran away and would not go to work...

The Congo will soon be far different from the wild country we found on our first arrival at Luebo. The Belgians are now talking of an airplane line from Brussels to Kinshasa, and it will be a matter of a very few years before the thing is put through. Then a letter will reach us from the USA in less than a month from the time it is written. Think of it! Nobody can tell what the future holds. If the States had the country, progress would be marvelous. But I am glad they haven't a hand in the thing....

While as "charge de station" (Legal Representative for the station), Dad had the major responsibility for official dealings with the Government representatives. Mother also assisted in the social aspects, as we often entertained them in our home. The more formal social customs of the Belgians led all the missionaries to pay particular attention to rank in seating of guests. The Belgian class system, social and diplomatic, extended even to remote outposts in Congo. State agents of differing

rank, no matter how isolated from other whites, had little to do with each other. Our father, so modest about personal awards that he swore the whole family to secrecy when Davidson College conferred on him an Honorary Doctor of Divinity, always wore his full array of Belgian medals in the presence of State officials. Both of our parents were decorated by the Belgium government, for their years of distinguished service to the country.

The opening of the roads brought in other visitors to Mutoto, often unannounced and of different nationalities. We children were always excited about visitors of any kind. On one occasion, when we were expecting a visit from a British missionary couple, Mother went to great lengths to explain the difference between the British and Americans, warning us especially not to use certain words considered inappropriate or vulgar in British circles. As Sid and I listened, the word "bug" impressed us indelibly as a "bad" word. Bugs of every description were around us daily, but according to mother, the word "bug" for the British, referred only to one unmentionable, the "bed bug." When the guests came, Sid and I were on model behavior, making ourselves "seen but not heard," according to parental instructions. But shortly after the British couple was escorted to the station guesthouse, Sid and I went over to the house and crept under a window near where they were sitting. Then we screamed "BUGS!" at the top of our lungs, not once, but twice! Not a sound came from the house, and, disappointed, we crept back home. Whether they heard us or not, neither the visitors nor our parents ever mentioned it.

In our association with the Africans, we also learned some bad words in Tshiluba, which were really offensive to them. When I tried one of these on a woman who was working for us, she reported it to my mother. For this my mouth was washed out with Ivory Soap, the usual treatment for sins of the mouth. Mother treated more serious offenses with a quick administration of the "lukodi," a switch made from a fibrous vine that gave stinging lashes on bare legs. Hard cases got the back of a brush from Dad, but I could usually cajole him into some leniency easier than I could my mother. The worst punishment of all was when Mother, making me kneel beside her, asked God to curb my hot temper and waywardness. I still regard this as unfair. We were a lively bunch, especially after Henry was older and joined the battles we had with each other. So many times our father commented in despair, "You children are going to drive your mother to Morganton!" Morganton, a small town near Hickory in North Carolina, was the location for a hospital for the mentally disturbed.

Chapter 4

Ku Mputu

There are only a few things I remember about my first visit to Ku Mputu, in 1920: the first taste of cherries, the smell of tanned leather, the smell of gasoline and a rag doll I received on my fourth birthday, appropriately named "Birthday." According to family, I refused to speak anything but Tshiluba, and was very puzzled when American blacks did not respond in kind.

In Hickory, my mother's sisters tried, without success, to converse with me but though I understood English, I held to my silence. One morning, after a heavy snow had blanketed the ground outside, one of the aunts pulled me to the window, certain that I would be excited about the strange sight. My reaction however, was not what she expected. Staring calmly at the all-white scene, I finally uttered my first words in English, "It lookth like thalt" (it looks like salt).

The second visit, in 1925, was a most memorable one, bringing into focus so many things previously only imagined from books or from our parents' descriptions of life in the States. I was 8 years old, Sid was 6, and Henry was a rambunctious 3-year old. As was customary for all departing missionaries, we got a big send-off from the Africans before leaving Mutoto for our furlough. A crowd, many of them students at MBS gathered in front of our house, speaking and singing their farewells. A passionate rendition of the hymn, "Till we Meet Again," in Tshiluba, brought tears from our emotionally inclined mother. "We will not forget you," our father responded. "We will tell the Ku Mputu people about you."

There, in the crowd, Sid and I saw some of our Congolese friends, Kavulu, Mubiai and Bende. We knew they would laugh if we did anything silly, for they had already given us their own private farewell. "Oh, you won't like Ku Mputu," Mubiai declared. Kavulu teased us with a song that had been sung to send off another missionary: "Nyimi, Nyimi, come back to our land. In Ku Mputu there is nothing. Here is the water of the Basongo."

The trip to the States followed approximately the same route as earlier journeys, starting on the river from Luebo aboard the little mission steamer, S.S. Lapsley. All of Congo life flowed into that river. The tiny streams of the Basongo, and the fierce little Mwanza Ngoma (both near Mutoto), the lazy Lulua at Luebo, then further down, the muddy brown Kasai, all converged into the blue-black Congo River. The trip down to Kinshasa was exciting with its ever-changing scenery. The banks thickly clustered with palm trees, exotic flowers and dense forest growth, canoes starting out from the fishing villages, and the mysterious dots in the water, turning into ugly hippo heads or crocodile snouts.

The Lapsley always tied up at a wood post before dark, in order to chop wood for the next day's travel. One day we tied up unusually early because of a brewing storm. As we neared the shore, two of the crew jumped into the river to carry the mooring cable into the bank where they would tie it to a sturdy tree. Just as they hit the water, two huge crocodiles jumped into the water from the opposite bank. Suddenly there was a churning mass of human legs and crocodile tails. One of the men cried out, "It caught me! I am dying!"

Captain Martin, an expert shot, aimed his rifle and hit one of the crocodiles. Suddenly all was still. The two men struggled ashore unharmed. But, just as they pulled out of the water, a third crocodile jumped in from the shore beside them. Miraculously the terrified men made it back to the ship safely. Adventures like this were rather common on the Lapsley.

From Kinshasa, where rapids below the widened Congo River at Stanley Pool prevented further water travel to the coast, we took the little wood burning train down to the ocean port at Matadi. We children were particularly fascinated with the ocean liner. Having heard about the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, our first act after boarding was to rush for the life jackets and lifeboats. Carried away by the drama of death at sea, Sid and I staged a funeral of our own, using a teddy bear he was ready to part with. After kissing and saying goodbye to the teddy bear, we tossed him overboard into the sea, and solemnly sang, "Jesus Loves Me," in Tshiluba. As far as I know there were no witnesses to this scene.

On the second ocean liner, the "S.S. Belgenland" from Antwerp, Belgium to New York City, our attention was diverted to more cheerful subjects, especially our anticipated arrival at the "Land of Liberty." We were fiercely patriotic, having taken our American history lessons very seriously. When a boy I met on the boat told me he spoke "English," I proudly replied that I spoke "American." When we entered the harbor at New York the band was playing the National Anthem as we caught our first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty.

Our stay in Antwerp, Belgium, had prepared us somewhat for the sights and sounds of Ku Mputu, but we had never seen anything like the tall buildings, huge stores and rushing cars of New York City. We spent only one night there, but during that time our parents had a hard time controlling our urge to explore everything. Certain that at least one of us would get lost, Dad put a note in each of our pockets advising police, or others who might find us, where and to whom we should be returned. We did not get lost, however, and the whole family boarded the train the next day for North Carolina, as scheduled.

Sleeping in Pullman bunks was another adventure for us, but nothing could match our excitement the next morning when the red Catawba River came into view, marking our imminent arrival in Hickory. We were particularly looking forward to seeing the brother we knew only from photos and letters. Would we know him?

What would he think of us? When we got off the train there was no difficulty in spotting Charles, Jr., a tall, thin, dark-haired boy of ten, resembling our mother and standing with one of her sisters. We were all a little shy at our first meeting, but it did not take long for us to warm up to each other.

At the Dixon home we met our Grandmother, a frail, elderly woman who was overjoyed at the return of her daughter. She was also welcoming and kind with us, but clearly disapproved of any “rowdy” behavior. Each of the three sisters, all single, had a specific role in the house. Mamie, or “Polly,” the eldest, ruled the kitchen; Frances, or “Nannie,” attended to the business affairs and took primary care of Charles; and Rosa Lee, the youngest next to our mother, was the breadwinner, teaching Algebra in the local high school. They were all good Presbyterians, highly respected in the town, and most supportive of our parents work in the Congo. Obviously devoted to Charles, Jr., they also showed much love and concern for our welfare. In fact, it was soon clear that our nine month furlough program had been carefully planned by the Dixons. Nannie had made all the arrangements for our apartment a few blocks away, and she had seen to all the furnishings, including some food supply. We were barely settled before she was discussing plans to take Mother “up street” to shop. Charles, Jr. would remain living with the Dixons, but would join us for occasional meals.



Grandmother Dixon
Fannie Hamilton Dixon
1849 - 1931

Chapter 5

Congo Developed

The Congo and its people have produced largely, and brought much money to the home country. Let us never forget that colonization must find its justification in the moral progress and the material welfare of the African population.... We have a moral responsibility toward the African populations whose government we have assumed.

King Albert's address to the second Belgian Colonial Congress, in early 1926, reflected a significant change in his country's attitude towards its' colony. Perhaps out of some concern for international opinion of Belgium's competence as a colonial administrator, they recognized that this was a time for development, rather than exploitation. Following World War I, the rich Ruanda-Urundi territory (modern Rwanda and Burundi) adjoining Congo, had also been put under Belgian mandate. Whatever Belgium's motives were, this period in the mid-twenties to the early thirties was one of rapid change, bringing some real benefits to the Congolese, but also some foreign-made problems. Positive changes included the establishment of an African Police Force, child welfare programs, and greater attention to health care. However, an epidemic of small pox threatened, and sleeping sickness, the disease caused by the bite of tsetse fly, was becoming more prevalent in the Kasai. In addition to sending out Belgian doctors and health agents to administer vaccinations, and examine for these diseases, Africans were offered training to become medical aides. The APCM medical training program, begun at Luebo in 1914, had already made significant impact on health conditions in the Kasai.

Fundamental to all the changes, and to support the enterprises already underway, was the building of a stronger and expanded transport system. This became a top priority, beginning with updating the rail system in the lower Congo, and extension of two branches into the interior to hook up with the intra-continental Cape to Cairo railroad. One of these extensions was to run some 400 miles through APCM territory. Ethel Wharton, an APCM missionary, described the vital role of the Congolese in the building of this line:

With a speed that was scarcely credible, the right of way took form across plain and through jungle. Large sections were built with only the crude, primitive tools of the people, who labored from morning till night on the strange new path the white man planned. The women chanted monotonously, as they filled their vine woven baskets with the rich damp earth, and emptied it on the fast advancing dump. The men spread the earth, tramped it smooth and then beat it hard and firm with the heavy flat ends of palm frond stems. From the men, too, came those rhythmic chants so dear to the heart of the African, accompanying the regular beat of scores of sticks falling in unison on the ever-hardening earth.

Similarly, the Africans provided labor for the automobile roads going through and near their villages. They were also made responsible for the roads' upkeep, though it was a long time before any of them owned cars or even motorcycles. Most of them continued, as many still do, to travel long distances by foot. The introduction of motor roads did relieve them of one burden, as portage was outlawed in 1926. There were also improvements in river transport, including introduction of large oil-run steamers with electric lights. On April 25, 1925 the first airplane from Leopoldville landed at Luebo, soon followed by other flights within the country and to Belgium.

These changes were not easy for the Congolese. All that development depended on their labor, which could still be coerced. The connection with the outside world, made by motor roads, railroads, steamers and airplanes, increased the number of foreign-directed enterprises drawing Africans away from their villages and into new lifestyles. Men and boys usually went to the mines, factories or plantations, leaving women and children behind. In 1931, when the great depression temporarily stopped demand for African labor, thousands of Congolese were laid off their jobs and returned to the villages. Ethel Wharton described the effects in the Kasai:

The men and boys who returned to their villages were not the same as when they left, nor were the villages the same. Perhaps the change came more slowly in the lower Congo, but in the Kasai district the people passed from the Iron Age into the age of the airplane in a single decade. It was a soul shaking experience. Would any other people have met it so valiantly?

The old leisurely village life, broken only by the annual visit of the tax collector and the occasional passing of a missionary, was gone forever. No longer was it enough to plant the small field to supply the needs of the family. One must have food to sell...manioc, corn, peanuts, and palm oil...in ever increasing quantities. The demands of the white man were insatiable. Cotton, too, must be cultivated and taken to market. The newly built motor roads must be kept in repair, and if an emergency landing field were nearby, it too must be kept clear. The women, children and older men did all of this work, chiefly. Most of the boys and men, from sixteen to thirty-five, were away in the railroad camps, at the mines or working for traders and government officials. Quickly though, the villagers adjusted to the new way of life. Market days found them with produce to sell, and left them with money to spend. There was compensation for the new hardness of life in the bright calicoes, gay beads, the enamel pots and iron pans, and all the other new treasures available at the trader's. Soon the passing of an airplane, whose first zooming had struck terror and amazement to their hearts, caused less commotion in the village than the wheeling of a hawk above a brood of chicks; and motorcars passed unnoticed.

The men and boys who left the village stepped into a new world. With little or no formal training, but with unexpected adaptability and matchless imitative skill, these children of forest and plain responded amazingly to the demands made upon them.

They drove and repaired cars and trucks; served as engineers, firemen and brakemen on the railroad; sold tickets and dispatched trains in the stations; they were telegraphers, bookkeepers, clerks, foremen, miners, overseers, as well as day laborers. For them, too, there was compensation for the loss of the old freedoms in the material things made available to them by their labors. A few of the more aggressive launched enterprises of their own, such as coffee plantations, stores or trading posts.

But this world of new experiences, new opportunities, new wealth, and new culture was also a world of new temptations and new vices. With wives and children left behind, away from the restraints of time-honored sanctions of tribe and clan, they found themselves in an environment for which they were wholly unprepared, either by training or experience. They saw the white foreigner, whom they admired and envied, engaging concubines and indulging in alcoholic drink. Is it to be wondered that some aped his conduct, his dress and his speech? Rather, the wonder is that so few did so... More than one European found his first interest in the Gospel stirred by the life and conduct of a humble black employee, and went or wrote to the Mission to learn more of the transforming power of Christ.

While the people quickly made superficial physical adjustment to the new life thrust upon them, they were not really at home in it...Deep dissatisfactions, strange hungers, which they themselves could neither understand nor explain, stirred their hearts and grew into an ever increasing restlessness. Unconsciously, their questions were to develop into something resembling resentment. Why, as a people, did they have so little while the foreigner had so much? What powers had he, that he would gather wealth from their land, which had yielded them but a simple living? Why he would not share his powers with them? An exaggerated sense of the foreigner's powers gave his possessions an unreal value, his conduct an undue importance. Whatever originated with the foreigner, per se, must be excellent. These false standards were accompanied by a corresponding contempt for their own culture. Their mental and spiritual needs were far greater than in the old village life. They needed a healthy pride in the worthwhile things of their own culture. They needed to preserve the good in their own institutions. They needed a sense of the dignity of their own life, apart from the ways of the white man. They needed to learn that any permanent advancement they would make, as a people, must come from within themselves, and that no outsider could give it to them.

Unfortunately the educational development, largely in the hands of Catholic Mission schools, gave the Africans little room for self-pride, stressing as it did "civilization" European style. Furthermore, the Catholic/Protestant conflict seriously disrupted educational progress all too frequently. Belgium's 1908 Colonial Charter granted freedom to Protestant and Catholic missions alike to open schools in the Congo. Before that, in 1906, a Concordat between the Congo Free State and the Vatican put the Catholics in a privileged position. Through this earlier agreement Catholic missions opened schools in the Congo in return for perpetual grants of land and subsidies to support religious, educational and scientific activities. The land they were given also had commercial possibilities. So, while the Protestant missions, up

to the end of World War II, had to rely almost exclusively on the support of their home churches, the Catholics had their basic expenses covered by the State. By 1930 there were 1800 Catholic missionaries in Congo, equaling the number of Belgians serving as Colonial Officers and agents. Belgium's administration of the Congo has often been described as a triumvirate of State, Church and Big Business. In 1930 Colonial Minister Franck used a statement by a Catholic leader to sum up its view of the State's program for the country:

What gives us especial hope is to note that the entire colonial elite, no matter what their opinion may be, is today persuaded that only the Christian Catholic religion, based on authority, is capable of changing native mentality, of giving to our Africans a clear and intimate consciousness of their duties, of inspiring in them a respect for authority and a spirit of loyalty toward Belgium.

In quoting this chauvinistic statement, Franck ignored the fact that he himself had publically expressed his admiration for the fine work in education being done by the APCM. The "civilizing" mission of the schools, promoted also to some extent by the Protestants, was repeatedly emphasized by the Belgians, as illustrated in these excerpts from the Government's 1929 document on "free education:"

The Primary Schools will gradually develop the following traits among the indigenous people: moral qualities, an aptitude for work and a habit for continuous effort. To achieve this objective, the teaching will consist in part of religious and moral education, and in part of an initiation into manual work, which will round off a very simple academic program and some basic ideas of hygiene.... To read, write and calculate in their own language is enough for the children in rural areas. A somewhat advanced literary education would be of little use to them...

In population centers, on the other hand, the lower primary schools might give a greater place to academic education in order to prepare pupils for more advanced studies. The direction of the teaching, however, will remain the same: training for work and sustained effort...

To be directed by missionaries, upper primary schools will be located in centers where pupils will be in contact with Europeans and will be likely to emulate them...

Similar to the APCM, there were schools in the villages and the mission stations, as well as "official" schools run by members of Catholic orders at administration centers, offering basic instruction and vocational training. The official schools operating in population centers put greater emphasis on French, advanced arithmetic and training for subordinate jobs in the government and private enterprises. Instruction was generally offered in one of the four major languages, Kikongo, Lingala, Swahili, and Tshiluba, but French was used more and more at the upper levels. Up to the end of World War II, education for most Congolese was confined to the primary grades and post-primary vocational training. Those in the rural areas rarely had more than two years of schooling.

While the APCM, like all the Protestant missions, had always had an uneasy relationship with the Catholics in the country, tension increased considerably as more and more Congolese were drawn to their schools and churches. By mutual agreement, Catholics and Protestants usually worked in separate areas. For example, a Catholic priest would lay claim to a particular village by planting a cross in the ground, but there were territorial disputes nonetheless. Some of the Belgium priests, if not cordial, were at least fair in their dealings with the Protestants, but there were those who used their close association with the State to make things difficult for the APCM, often spreading false rumors about them among the Africans. The worst part of the Catholic/Protestant conflict was the dilemma it caused for the Congolese, forcing them to choose one side or the other.

Over the years, several Belgians, including former Catholics, joined the APCM staff. One of these, Joseph Savels, had his first contact with the Presbyterian mission in 1913, when he was serving as Father Superior of the Roman Catholic Mission at Lusambo. At his initiative an agreement was made between the two missions to work together in solving disputes between their Congolese adherents. Surprised and delighted, the APCM missionaries at Lusambo welcomed the cooperation and soon discovered how determined Father Savels was to improve relations between the two Christian churches. On learning from one of the missionaries that a Catholic African teacher, assisted by his students, had not only torn down an APCM village school, but had also threatened the teacher's life, the missionaries, accompanied by Savels, went to the village to investigate the incident. There they learned that the Catholic teacher had been ordered by his Belgian superior to "drive this heretic out of the village and destroy his school," or else he would be "turned out in disgrace." After ordering the Catholic teacher and his students to rebuild the school and house, and also apologize for their actions, Savels sent the priest responsible for the affair to the Bishop in Luluaburg, and recommended he be sent back to Belgium. Later, Savels himself was transferred to England. While there, he left the Catholic Church, joined the Presbyterian Church and married a nun who had also left the church. They applied for an appointment to the APCM and returned to Congo in 1918, where they served for 18 years.

There were other priests who tried to establish friendly relations with the Protestants, even though their superiors did not encourage it. Father Busch was particularly popular with the APCM, for he would often accept invitations to share meals with the Protestants and would sometimes even ask the blessing. It was not long before he, too, was transferred elsewhere.

While the Presbyterians tried to maintain cordial relations with the Catholics, refraining from criticizing them in front of the Congolese, they often expressed anti-Catholic sentiments among themselves. Always interested in political events in the USA, the missionaries were jubilant when Herbert Hoover defeated the Catholic candidate, Al Smith.

In addition to trying to make its educational system conform to standards set by the State, the APCM periodically underwent evaluations of its work by the Presbyterian Foreign Missions Board, and other agencies in the USA. In 1922, the Phelps Stokes Commission called the APCM's effect on the African people "one of the most notable achievements in the Belgium Congo," but also offered suggestions for improvement and further development. Soon after the MBS move to Mutoto, Frank Gilliam, a newly arrived full-time educational specialist, undertook a major study and reorganization of the APCM education program. Although Gilliam stayed only six years, his work greatly facilitated the development of the APCM's comprehensive education program for the Congolese people. In addition to those people with education specialization, APCM doctors, nurses, agriculturalists and industrialists were all called on to help prepare the text books for French, arithmetic, geography, hygiene, physiology, agriculture and manual skills. Mrs. Plumer Smith, a highly qualified educational specialist at Mutoto, undertook the difficult task of designing tests to assist grade placement of the student applicants, who were so wide ranging in age and ability. Her husband, one the most colorful and original missionaries on the APCM, reported her efforts in a letter to mission supporters in the US:

Mrs. Smith has been trying to work out an intelligence test for children entering the school, some of whom are forty years old. If they can never learn, why keep them in the first chart for years? She got herself a list of questions, and one day opened up on me. I answered for a while, then asked "Are you trying to find out if your questions are good, or are you trying to find out if you married a moron several years ago?" I made 50.

Tests notwithstanding, there was no stopping the flood of Congolese seeking to learn. The "mob of 19,500 pupils, from 5 year olds to gray hairs," reported in 1920, in later years grew to over 45,000. As one report stated, "They come, old and young, without truant laws, parental discipline or public opinion. They come, led on by a hunger within." With all its efforts, however, the mission was never able to catch up with the educational demands of the Congolese people.

Ethel Wharton described the pivotal role played by our father and his MBS colleagues, in responding to the African's thirst for education:

As literacy increased, the J. Leighton Wilson Press was pushed to capacity. Hymnbooks, schoolbooks, Bible commentaries, a Church history and a Book of Church Order, were eagerly bought it seemed, by all who could read. The Bible was in constant demand. By 1935 the Baluba speaking people were said to be provided with a literature in the vernacular unequalled by that of any other tribes in Africa. For this literature the Mission is largely indebted to Mr. J.W. Allen, and Mr. C.L. Crane. In addition to their teaching duties in the Bible Schools at Mutoto and Bulape, they worked tirelessly to prepare commentaries on both the Old and New Testaments. Often, too, they secured the funds to defray the cost of printing the books. The use of this literature spreads far beyond the bounds of the Mission. Mail orders for commentaries and Church History came from distant places.

At least some of the credit for these accomplishments was due to some very able Africans working with the missionaries, especially Sende Joseph, Dad's chief assistant at MBS. Sende had not only absorbed all that the school systems could offer, but on his own, and with much help from Dad, had learned enough English and French to read histories, commentaries and anything else available. Devoted to his mentor, Sende's handwriting was so similar to our father's, that when hand-written messages in English came up to our house from the Bible School, Mother could not tell, except by the content, whether the message was from her husband or Sende.

Dad started a newspaper, "Luma Lua Bena Kasai," soon after he came to the mission. It was suspended during the World War, but resurrected as a monthly in 1927. Writing in 1952, Ethel Wharton described the continuing popularity of the little newspaper:

Carrying inspirational articles, the Sunday school lesson, a women's page, a children's page and occasional bits of secular news, the paper met a deep-seated need in the lives of the Kasai Christians. In a year, it had over a thousand subscribers, including some as far away as Elizabethville. Circulation increased constantly. From Egypt to Rhodesia, from Boma to Costermansville the subscriptions have come. During World War II it followed one soldier to Palestine. The printed word is becoming a powerful factor in the lives of the Congolese.

Our mother's work with the women at MBS was on a different level, but equally important, not only in providing them with the basic education most of them had been denied, but also in developing the leadership abilities they would need when they returned with their husbands to the villages. Still, far from being a die-hard feminist, Mother's years in the Congo had changed her considerably from the young woman shocked at the demonstration of the British Suffragettes, to one much more self assured and increasingly conscious of the need for women everywhere to broaden their roles beyond those traditionally assigned to them. Reflecting a change in his own attitude, in a classification of women as either "clinging vines" or "sturdy oaks," Dad now proudly called Mother a "sturdy oak."

Although many of the Congolese women were strong in spirit and in body, their adjustments to the country's changing lifestyles were more difficult than those for the men. Even at the MBS, many of the African men retained the traditional view of women as primarily bearers of children, responsible only for the care and feeding of the family. One of Dad's students quoted a Lulua proverb couched in Biblical terms to support his views. "When God made Adam and Eve," he declared, "He gave Eve a hoe and told her to go to the field and dig, while he gave Adam a pipe and told him to sit at home and smoke."

In Congo, as elsewhere in Africa, women were a vital part of the work force, not only for domestic chores, but also for food growing and gathering. The women worked along with the men on road building and other development projects initiated by

the Belgium government. But with the Government's increasing emphasis on technology, the women's roles became less complementary to those of the men. For many reasons, among them Ku Mputu and African attitudes about the place of women, and the move of men and boys away from the villages to the new foreign enterprises, the women were largely denied the training they needed for new forms of work. Even in the offices, men usually held secretarial jobs, for all women were generally considered incapable of handling typewriters.

The APCM's work with women got an early start in 1894 with the founding of the Pantops Girl's Home at Luebo by Maria Fearing. An ex-slave from Alabama, with only a 9th Grade education, Maria Fearing was 53 years old when she applied to the Foreign Mission Board for service in Congo. Because of her age she was turned down as a salaried missionary, but was allowed to go as a volunteer, selling her home to pay the expenses of the trip to Congo. Soon recognized for invaluable contributions to the work, she became a regular missionary and served the APCM for 24 years. Most of her time was spent as Matron of the Pantops Girl's Home, an outgrowth of her special interest in helping homeless girls, especially redeemed slaves and orphans, and other girls in trouble. Child marriages were common at that time. Later, the Pantops Home, and Girl's Homes established at other stations, were opened to girls who had shown a genuine desire for learning and making a better life for themselves. With special emphasis on Christian home making, including some practical skills, the girls were provided basic education in the three "R's", and more advanced subjects as the years went on.

The increase of Girl's Home-trained wives at MBS resulted in some better prepared entrants into the Women's School, but the educational needs of most of the women was still great. With the assistance of two extremely able APCM-trained teachers, Pastors Kabongo and Kanyinda, Mother and her missionary colleagues developed a program for the women that served their practical needs and also challenged them intellectually. My own remembered observations relate more to the practical matters, such as the cooking classes in our back yard, where the women learned about proper nutrition for themselves and their children. They learned to prepare more balanced meals using readily available local produce. After weaning from their mothers' breasts, many babies had "bidia," a thick mush of manioc flour and corn meal, stuffed down their throats until a string tied around their stomachs broke, indicating they had enough. Hygiene and childcare were extremely important now, because of the greater vulnerability to diseases caused by increased population mobility and the infiltration of foreigners.

Mother regularly made visits to the homes of the students, both to know them better and to check on how well they were putting their lessons into practice. I accompanied her on a number of these visits, which always opened with the "name game." Mother's ability to remember everyone's name was legend, so every time we arrived at a home, each woman would stand with a broad grin, waiting to see if her name would be remembered without prompting. When Mother called the name immediately, as she usually did, all the women would clap in delight. This special

ability proved most useful when some MBS records were burned and Mother was able to recall long lists of names from memory. While the social parts of the visits usually went well, inspection results were mixed, some homes in good order but others not as good. A suggestion for establishing a separate, more sanitized play area for babies and small children was carried out by many, but at one home we found a grown man sitting in the playpen. The practice of sharing meals together as a family, idealized by Americans, proved largely impractical because of the strong African tradition of having the men served first, women and children afterwards. In a January 1930 letter to home church supporters, Dad, just returned from a meeting of the Congo Protestant Council in Kinshasa, described the importance of the APCM's links to other Protestants working in the Congo, especially in relation to the recent problems with the "Romanists:"

One of the things that has always impressed me in the Congo is the spirit of cooperation that exists among the various missionary societies in the Belgian Congo. A lot of money has been saved for the various societies by cooperating in the erection and maintenance of a missionary hostel, where missionary families can stay at Kinshasa while waiting for boats up the river or for the steamers sailing to Europe. What the Hostel is to our comfort, the Congo Protestant Council is to our spiritual and educational work. For instance, at this last meeting, a missionary society just commencing work in the Congo applied for advice as to the territory best suited to and most needing its efforts, and they were assigned the southwestern corner of the Colony, a place where no missionary society has yet begun to work. In the assigning of the territory to be evangelized to the various missionary societies, and in making readjustments of territory, the Council had done invaluable service for many years. Of course its actions are not binding on any society, and could not be, but as "liberty is voluntary submission to legitimate authority" there has never been any violation of such liberty on the part of a Protestant society, so far as I know...

It has become absolutely necessary for the Protestants to organize into a more compact group in the Congo because of the determined efforts of the Romanists to destroy all Protestant effort...The forces now arrayed against us are too strong for any one missionary society to cope with...The Romanists have declared it as their avowed purpose to harass the Protestants and destroy their efforts. They now have unlimited funds behind them. Schools are being erected with State money given over entirely to Romanist control. One such school has been erected near Mutoto to counteract the work of the Morrison Bible School...while our Bible School stands begging for adequate equipment."

Chapter 6

Ku Mputu In Vogue

While many of the missionaries, including our parents, shared Ethel Wharton's concerns about the African's rapid adoption of foreign lifestyles and accompanying materialism, their own preoccupation with the carefully organized mission program of education and evangelism left little time to deepen their understanding of African traditional values and cultures. From the beginning, imposition of their own standards of cleanliness and decency had drastically changed the very appearance of their African converts. In a color postcard, published by the Mission Board, and entitled "Native Evangelists with Dr. Morrison", the pioneer missionary is dressed in a white suit and is surrounded by a number of African men wearing suits and ties, and a few others in loose-fitting pajama-style clothes. Another postcard shows Dr. Morrison, again in a white suit, with his "language boy," Matabixe, sitting together at a desk, with another Congolese boy sitting at their feet on the floor. Matabixe, a young man, is wearing a khaki suit, shirt and shoes, rare at that time for Africans. The little boy appears to be wearing the customary loincloth. In later years at Mutoto, dress for MBS students and other "Bena Mishonyi" (Mission people), was simpler, but still distinguished them from their village counterparts. Those in the Girls and Boys Homes had uniforms made from white or blue mission cloth. The missionaries were sometimes critical regarding body markings, hairstyles, and other practices associated with traditional customs, especially when they suspected "pagan" connections. When we asked our Congolese friends about the markings on their faces, and filed teeth, they were quite open about them, explaining that they were marks of identification with a particular clan. One young man who had two front teeth missing, told us he had knocked out the teeth himself because, if he had not done it, his family or clan would have done it for him. The "munkuyu," a hair style appearing suddenly among the young men at Mutoto, caused some talk among the missionaries, but turned out to be only a passing fad: a long thread-wrapped switch of hair, the longer the better, coming straight down between the eyes, and over the face. Our Congolese friends enjoyed laughing with us about it. In reality they were much more interested in Ku Mputu things.

One of the most significant effects of the Ku Mputu influence was the adoption of foreign personal names. Among those who had become Christians, it had long become customary to adopt a name from the Bible, in either French or Tshiluba. Some of my Congolese friends decided I should also have a Christian name, and added "Eseta" (Esther) to my Tshiluba name, so I became Mbombo Eseta. With the craze for all things foreign, a so-called Christian name could also be a foreign name from any source, for example "Pascal," taken from a candy bottle label.

While still getting teased by our African friends, including those who worked for us, we children took advantage of their increasing craving for Ku Mputu things. There was a rule in our house that all the children, with the exception of David, still a baby, had to make up their own beds and keep their rooms in order, with no assistance from the servants. Ntumba, and Muamba, the main household staff now, understood this and kept clear of our rooms. Sid and I were not enthusiastic about our household chores, but resigned ourselves to getting them over with as quickly as possible. With Henry it was a different matter. He hated such unpleasant chores and devoted his full energy toward getting out of them. With his bed unmade, he sat for hours on the bannister of the back porch, trying to persuade Ntumba or Muamba to “help” him. “To!” (No), Ntumba would say firmly. “Mama Luse told us not to make your bed. Go do it yourself!” “But, Ntumba, I have a headache!” Henry would plead, causing both men to burst out laughing. They knew Henry was always afflicted by “headaches” when there was something unpleasant to do. Ntumba and Muamba turned back to their washtubs, whistling and singing, deliberately ignoring Henry. Yet he persisted, finally turning to bribery. “I’ll give you a piece of toast, Ntumba...Look at this belt buckle, Muamba. I’ll give it to you if you make up my bed.” Often the offer of Ku Mputu things worked, and Ntumba or Muamba would creep in and accomplish the detested chore for Henry.

Weddings, among the Congolese associated with the Mission, became occasions for display of Ku Mputu acquisitions as status symbols. After the ceremony the Bride, Groom and their entourage, would promenade through the village or mission station to be admired in their borrowed suits, shoes, hats and other finery. Some of the party would ostentatiously make remarks in something resembling French. Our cook, Tshiamalenge, was in great demand for these wedding processions, for he possessed a pair of spectacles, actually only the rims, which he insisted on wearing himself, sitting low on his nose.

We children laughed along with our parents at the vanity of the Congolese and their awkward attempts to imitate us. But, underneath it all, we did not really understand what was going on, and we were sometimes uncomfortable with our African friends. When we asked our mother why our friends could not eat with us, as we sometimes did with them, she replied that there were “too many of them,” and “besides, they don’t know how to use knives and forks.” One of our chief joys was to eat native “chop” with our hands, dipping a wad of “bidia,” the manioc and corn meal mush, into the common bowls of hot peppered chicken, and manioc greens cooked in palm oil. Topped off with a juicy slice of pineapple or mango, it was the most wonderful feast in the world to us!

Occasionally there was talk on the Mission of preserving native values, and paying more attention to Congo traditional culture and social systems. Some missionaries had genuine respect for these things. But sometimes opposition came from unexpected sources. When a visiting Foreign Missions Secretary from the States suggested adapting some of the traditional Congo music for Christian worship, it was Mrs. Edmiston, the black missionary from Alabama, who raised the most

objections. “Those ditties!” she exclaimed scornfully. For her and others the music was too closely associated with “heathen” ways.

Chapter 7

The Mission Family

The group of missionaries on the APCM, changing from time to time, provided an interesting and supportive family for all of the American children growing up there. At that time, probably nowhere in America would it have been possible for a group so diverse as the one at Mutoto, to work together and share a social life. Though we did not get in the habit of addressing all of our parent's colleagues as "Aunt" or "Uncle," as did many of the children, there were a number to whom we felt quite close. Among them was the Jamaican couple, Mr. and Mrs. Rochester. Mr. Rochester, whom we affectionately called by his African name, "Nyimi Nyimi," worked closely with Dad at the MBS. The two men had a deep respect for each other, and as a standing joke between them, called each other "Boss." Nyimi Nyimi was tall, thin and very black, and a true gentleman. His wife was petite, coffee-colored, with large, doe-like eyes. Their English was a mixture of British accent and Jamaican cadences. They paid a lot of attention to us and made us feel very important, possibly because they had no children of their own. "Rosy as a peach!" Mr. Rochester would say, as he admired Sid's blue eyes, curly hair and ruddy complexion. Such compliments usually embarrassed Sid, but any praise from Nyimi Nyimi was special. Though I lacked Sid's physical assets, Nyimi Nyimi always found something nice to say about me, and I loved him dearly for it. When I was much younger, an incident occurred which caused my parents much embarrassment, but brought a hearty laugh from Mr. Rochester. He had picked me up and was holding me in his arms. I stared in his face and asked, "Nyimi Nyimi, why is your face so black?" Apparently it was the first time I realized that some Ku Mputu people, like the Rochesters and Edmistons, could be the same color as the Congolese.

While the missionary social life at that time was generally separate from that of the Africans, some of the Congolese we knew were also like family to us. One incident illustrating this occurred when our Mother was away on a rare trip to Luebo, leaving us in the care of our father. In addition to his many other duties, Dad was spending considerable time supervising the building program at the Bible School, particularly the erection of a permanent chapel and auditorium. We often joined him there, but on this particular day we were playing at another part of the station. Suddenly there was a loud wail coming from the direction of our house. We saw a crowd of people pressing into the front yard, and as we got closer, saw Dad being carried in on a stretcher, absolutely still. "Wakufua!" (He has died) cried many of the people. Dr. King was on furlough, but Nina Farmer, the station nurse, had arrived and was trying to push back the crowd. "Stand back and give him air," she pleaded in Tshiluba, but they pushed closer until finally forced aside. Even after they had managed to get Dad inside and on his bed, there were hundreds of black faces swarmed around the windows.

Our father was not dead, but unconscious and badly hurt. The scaffolding, on which he had been climbing at the building site, had given way and he had fallen about 20 feet, striking his head and left arm on the floor. Fortunately, the floor had not yet been cemented. There was a Belgian doctor at Luluaburg, some forty miles away, so Bill Worth set out by bicycle to fetch him. The station had a Model T Ford car, called "Marse Henry," but it was not available at that time. In any case, a car would have been useless because rains had swelled the fierce little Mwanza Ngoma River, on the route to Luluaburg, and its narrow bridge was washed away. When Bill arrived at the river he hooked his bicycle over one arm and worked himself hand over hand across the river by means of the one remaining pole of the bridge. Then, before going on, he started a group of men rebuilding the bridge. Bill Worth and the doctor got back to Mutoto a day and a half later.

It was nearly two days before Dad regained consciousness. Miss Farmer and the other missionaries comforted us kids, and cared for us, frightened and bewildered as we were without our parents. But it was the Congolese who helped the most. After the first curious crowds had been dispersed, a group of men, all Dad's students, refused to leave the house until he regained consciousness and they were sure he was going to be alright. All night and all day they watched quietly by his bedside, sometimes praying, sometimes singing hymns softly on the veranda outside. They said little to us, but we understood their devotion and love for "Mulunda Dibue," their "friend like a rock."

A runner was sent to Luebo to call Mother, and though she started back to Mutoto immediately, the truck carrying her broke down. All along the way she heard rumors that her husband was dead. The Tshiluba word for "dead" and "unconscious" was the same, "mufue." She did not learn the truth until she reached Mutoto finally, almost a week later. By that time Dad was well on his way to recovery.

Mutoto was a wonderful place to live, warm but rarely hot in the alternating rainy and dry seasons. In addition to the palms all around the station, there were mango, papaya and other fruit trees, bamboo forests and flowering bushes such as lantana. Purple bougainvillea hung in thick clusters over the red tin roof of our house, frangipani bloomed fragrantly in the front yard, and the brick flower boxes surrounding the front porch were filled with nasturtium, phlox and sometimes roses. Mother particularly enjoyed watching the glorious sunsets from our back porch, and often tried to express her feelings about them to the household staff. But neither she, nor they, could find the Tshiluba words to describe the dazzling array of colors in so many subtle shades. The only color words were single, all-inclusive ones for white, black and red, and there were none specifically for purple, yellow, blue or brown. The word for green was "mai a matamba," or "the water from manioc greens."

For the first time, we had a kitchen under the same roof as our house. There was, of course, no electricity so all cooking was done on a wood stove. In the back porch area, separating the kitchen from the dining room, there were hanging screen cupboards in which the perishable foods were kept cool and safe from the ever-present ants. Also kept here were earthen jars of boiled drinking water, large bunches of bananas, plantains, fresh pineapples and other produce. A tightly locked storage room held all the tinned foods ordered yearly from European and American supply houses. Besides staples, like canned butter, milk, sugar and flour, the supplies included some foods, not available locally, such as potted meats, canned salmon and sardines. Vendors came up to the porch frequently – a child balancing a gourd of eggs on his head, a woman with a bunch of bananas on her head, or a man holding a squawking chicken. Tshiamalenge, a temperamental man, presided over our kitchen. If he was in a good mood he could produce a light, fluffy spoon bread that would do honor to any southern U.S. kitchen. At other times he was careless, and strange creatures such as flies, worms or spiders might turn up in our food.

The family barbershop, generally directed by Mother, was also on the back porch. On hair cutting days, Dad, the boys and I would line up and wait our turn in the “barber chair,” with a towel pinned tightly around the neck. Dull scissors and rusty clippers did not help Mother’s barbering skills, limited at best. She was a little more successful with the boys, even Henry, whose dark hair was as straight as mine. The results with me were generally disastrous. Getting the bangs even was hard enough, but her attempts at getting both sides even usually ended up with my hair cut high above my ears, one side longer than the other. Invariably I would cry and try to hide from everyone in sight. On the few occasions when Mr. Rochester took charge of the barbering, the whole family looked better for his efforts.

There was a long, low shed in the backyard, where the day and night sentries stayed and took care of their various duties such as running errands, sometimes helping Ntumba and Muamba, and keeping the fires going for heating water. After some cisterns were installed, our water supply, hauled from the Basongo Spring in the valley, was supplemented with rainwater and piped into the house. All day long in the back yard, whatever they were doing, whether it was washing, ironing, or making soap out of palm oil and lye, Ntumba, Muamba and the others would keep a steady stream of chatter, song and whistle talk. Whistle talk, similar to drum talk in its use of tone and rhythm variations to transmit messages, is particularly adaptable to the Tshiluba language. With much persistence I persuaded Ntumba to teach me a few phrases and names in whistle talk. However, except for a joking song about a white man, thought to be a cannibal because he had so many fillings in his teeth, I was not successful in getting Ntumba, or any of the others to teach me some of the wonderful African songs I heard them singing, accompanying themselves on the handheld “tshisanji.” They regarded their music as not worthy of our attention. Nowadays, their “tshisanji,” made of metal strips, varied in length and laid over a wooden or gourd sound box, has appeared in commercial versions in the U.S. and is popular elsewhere, known variously under such names as “sanza,” “mbira” or “thumb piano.”

Each weekday began early, with the noisy crowing of roosters and the sound of the “tshiondo,” a hollowed out drum, beaten with two rubber- tipped sticks, to give the call to six o’clock morning prayers. Soon the air was filled with the sounds of school: teacher and student exchanges at the MBS, loud recitations by children at the village day school and the students from the Boy’s and Girl’s Homes marching to classes. Chanting “hanh-deh, hahn- deh,” an attempt to count in French, the students swung their arms and legs gracefully in rhythm to the one-two beat, making it more of a dance than a march. At noon there was a two-hour break for a meal and rest period, mandatory even for the children. This ended, again, with the beat of the tshiondo. In the late afternoon, after work was finished, the center for missionary recreation was a tennis court in the middle of the station. Those who were not playing watched or strolled around with their children. This was also where station picnics, American holiday celebrations and the occasional dramatic presentations by the children occurred. One of the plays we staged was a tear-jerking melodrama based on “The Wreck of the Old Ninety-Seven,” a then popular song about a train wreck in Virginia.

Our days as children were increasingly filled with school work, but there was still time for playing in the mango and bamboo groves, making tree houses, or riding our bicycle (our family had only one to share) around the station. We spent a lot of time with our African friends, who had an increasing interest in Kum Mputu things. Sid tried to teach them baseball, but when it was “mintutu” season, the chirping of these large crickets would clear the field, as the Congolese loved to catch them to eat.

The day of the week that always seemed twice as long as any others was Sunday. Called “Dituku dia Nzambi,” or “Day of God,” we had to attend both African and English services, as well as our own religious instruction. We were forbidden to read the “funny” (comic) papers, bicycle riding, or anything we considered fun. One Sunday leniency though, especially pleasing to Henry, was that we did not have to take a bath.

First on the Sunday schedule was the African service, to which everyone was summoned with the beating of the tshiondo. Men sat on one side of the church, women on the other, and babies, sometimes chicken and goats, wandered freely everywhere. The missionaries usually sat together in a group. Often the preacher had to stop for a while to let the noise of baby’s cries, goat’s baas or loud coughs of the congregation die down. Sometimes there was a small, portable, foot-pumped organ, which one of the missionaries would play, but more often there were no musical instruments. A song leader stood at the front and slapped a book to indicate the rhythm. The Congolese sang loudly and passionately, with prolonged emphasis on certain parts of the Tshiluba words set to western melodies. One of their favorites was “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder. ” The Tshiluba words of the climactic phrase came out, “HEL-a-bo mpungi,” as they dwelt especially long and loudly on the first syllable. Their rendition became so ear-splitting that the missionaries banned the hymn for a while. To endure the long services, I invented

all sorts of games. I found, for example, that opening and shutting my ears with both hands gave all the noises an accordion effect.



Sunday School in the Church Shed

Sunday afternoons were jammed full. First there was the African Sunday School, which we also had to attend, followed by our private instruction at home in English. The Bible stories at home were fun, for our parents could make the characters really come alive for us. David, Moses and the Disciples of Christ were familiar friends when I met them many years later in the art galleries of Paris and Florence. We were also drilled on the Presbyterian Catechisms. With the incentive of a small monetary reward from Dad, Sid and I raced to finish the Shorter Catechism. I won this competition, mainly due to the fact that Sid lost some time going on a hunting trip from which I was excluded. Justice had prevailed.

Sunday finally ended with the English service, attended only by the missionaries and their children, in the station chapel. We could be sure of shorter sermons when it was the turn of non-clergymen like Mr. Worth or Dr. King to preach. I was always glad when Dad preached because he chose the hymns I liked from the hymnals, stirring choices like "A Mighty Fortress" or "Our God Our Help in Ages Past." My introduction to Bach, still one of my great loves, occurred when a visiting doctor from the Methodist mission played a Bach piece on a violin.

Other than the orchestras playing on the trans-Atlantic voyages, our main exposure to any type of non-church music was through a little crank-up Victrola, and a small

collection of mostly classical records acquired by our father. Though the transmission was scratchy and wavering I spent many hours enthralled by the violin playing of Fritz Kreisler, the voices of Caruso, Galli-Curci, Schumann-Heink, and others, in arias from all the great operas. The louvered front of the little Victrola became, for me, an opening to a great concert hall or opera house. I often felt the musicians were in there! It was easy to imagine the scene because of stories Dad told us of one of his sisters, who had a brief European career as an opera singer. Unfortunately her career was cut short by an unhappy marriage.

We had a few records, as did other missionaries, which were mainly to amuse the Congolese. One of these was "Uncle Josh at The Dentist," full of groaning sounds that always made the Africans laugh, while at the same time they were totally awed by the "talking machine." Once they had the opportunity to hear it, the Congolese became devotees of the best Ku Mputu music, old and new. When L.A. McMurray came to the station he became a major asset to the mission when he started a music-training program. McMurray, a bachelor at the time, was a man of many talents, including linguistic skills and a natural gift for music. Though his formal training was limited when he first arrived, he continued to develop it during furlough periods. Assigned primarily to the MBS faculty, he organized choirs there and elsewhere, teaching music by the sol-fa system, and eventually introduced singing in four-part harmony. Separate groups would walk past our house; one group singing tenor, another bass, another soprano and another alto. When they got together it was glorious! McMurray also helped refine their tone, and of course they had no problem with rhythm. Even without accompaniment they could rip through Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" without missing a beat.

The African choirs added greatly to the Christmas celebrations, which began with an early morning pageant outdoors, sometimes at the Bible School, other times on the hospital hillside. A star-shaped lantern moved on a cable across the stage, while Congolese, dressed as Joseph, Mary and the other Biblical characters, and accompanied by live goats and sheep, acted out the nativity story, with choirs singing around them. A most important part of this and other services at Christmas, was the bringing in of offerings for the church, which, for many of the Africans, consisted of produce from their fields.

Although there was no exchange of personal gifts between the missionaries and the Africans, the American missionaries did retain, for themselves, some of the secular celebration of Christmas. At our home, we hung up stockings, and left a plate of cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve. Aside from one "store-bought" item, usually something practical like a pen or a hairbrush, stowed away from the last furlough trip, or ordered by catalogue, our gifts for each other were homemade. I was delighted with new clothes for my dolls, made by my mother. Among my creations for her was a "mop" made of old stockings, crudely bunched together on a stick painted bright orange. On Christmas Eve the missionaries gathered around a decorated tree, and, especially for the benefit of the small children, awaited the arrival of Santa Claus. When he arrived, dressed in a tattered red suit and scraggly

white cotton beard, the person playing Santa Claus usually had a story about having had problems crossing the Muanza Ngoma River in his Model T Ford. One year, when we were older, Sid played the part of Santa Claus, and David, who still believed in Santa Claus, noted that Santa had socks just like Sid's. The principal gifts at the station Christmas celebration were the large watermelons circling the tree, each carved with the name of one of the missionary families. These came from Mr. Edmiston, whose talent at growing beautiful melons was much envied by our father. Dad's favorite recreation was gardening, but his watermelons never got bigger than cucumbers.



Louise and Charles,
with Mr. Bedinger, at Mutoto, 1920,s

Chapter 8

Central School: The Net Closes

Parents of the APCM became increasingly anxious about the education of their children. Rather than send their children home to America, as a few had begun to do, some of the families agreed to try an experimental school at Mutoto. It was a fairly central location, and there were three mothers there with teaching backgrounds, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Worth and our mother. The Millers agreed to house the students from other stations, Elizabeth McKee from Bibanga, Jane and Roy Cleveland from Lubondai, and Sanki Stegall from Luebo. Day students from Mutoto were Mesu and Robert King, Sid and I.

Our mother was in general charge of the school, and she had a time of it trying to place us in grades. No two children were at the same level. She was particularly anxious to avoid showing favoritism to her own children. I was especially good at spelling, and after I had won several spelling contests in succession she was embarrassed. Taking me aside she suggested, "How about letting Elizabeth win next time?" "No!" I said stubbornly. Next time it was a "tie".

In our off-school hours we had a marvelous time with the larger group of American children, but played less frequently with our Congolese friends. It was my first opportunity to be with several white girls of my age, and get to engage in real girl talk. Congolese girls grew up so fast they were almost not allowed to be children. My friend Bende, though only my age, nine, was already promised to a man who was paying dowry to her father.

Jane, Elizabeth, Mesu and I would ride around the station on our bikes for hours, stopping off at a mango grove for some mysterious rites. We loved "magic." Many of our ideas came from the Grimm's Fairy Tales we had read, and others from the "buadi" we had seen performed by the Congolese. I was often the organizer for our activities, and sometimes my ideas got out of hand. Mesu King's tendency to whine about everything had always bothered me, so one day I decided to give her something real to complain about. I was pretty sure that Jane Cleveland, a docile, well-behaved girl, could be counted on to help me carry out my plan, which was to be executed during our usual bike ride around the station. "While we are riding around the station today," I told Jane, "you start pretending like you are throwing a fit. Foam at the mouth or something like that! Then throw down your bike, run over to Mesu and bite her HARD...real HARD!"

Jane thought that would be fun, so we went through with the plan. Jane did a good job of foaming at the mouth, threw her bike down and then, as Mesu and I had both

stopped our bikes she dived at Mesu and sank her teeth into her leg. Mesu was very surprised, and started to cry.

"Don't cry Mesu," I soothed her. "Jane is just having one of her fits. Her mother told my mother that she has these sometimes, but not to think anything about it."

With Mesu bitten as planned, I was satisfied with our scheme. However, that was not the end of the matter. Several days later Mother confronted me. "What is this I hear about Jane Cleveland having fits?" she asked me. Mesu naturally had told her father, and being the station doctor, he wondered why he had not been informed about Jane's malady.

There was nothing I could do but confess the whole plot, which shocked my mother. She then decided on the worst possible form of punishment for me. I must go to Dr. King myself and explain it all. Nothing could have been harder for me to do. Even under ordinary circumstances Dr. King was rather stern and unapproachable. What would he do to me now? I dragged myself slowly to the King residence and asked to see Dr. King. He could not have been nicer. Before I could finish stammering out my apology Dr. King put his arms around me and gave me a kiss. There was an unmistakable gleam of amusement in his eyes.

The education net drew closer around us. School at Mutoto had regimented our lives a little more than before, but we still had a lot of time to ourselves. The missionary mothers who were teaching us continued to have additional responsibilities to the Congolese. At a mission meeting, having decided that our educational experiment was a success, all the parents voted to establish a Central School for missionary children, with buildings of its own and a full time teacher hired from the States. The new school would be at Lubondai, about 150 miles from Mutoto.

We did not know what to make of this, but we felt our freedom diminishing. It sounded more and more like Ku Mputu, where we remembered school was stiffer, and more formal. After comparing notes with other children who had been to the States recently, we all agreed that we hated school and everything that went with it, including the teachers. When rumors circulated, in late 1927, that our new teacher, Virginia Holladay, had already arrived on the mission, we spoke of her scornfully. "She's very tiny," reported Peggy Stixrud, who had seen her at Luebo, "Not more than four feet tall!" "She talks funny!" someone else said.

"She says, 'kyah' for 'car,' and 'gyahden' for 'garden,' and she says other funny things like 'how-oose' and 'mow-oose'."

"My mother says that is how they talk in Virginia."

"Not everybody in Virginia talks that way. My father is from there and he says 'car' and 'house' just like everyone else".

We were happy to find that our parents also found Miss Holladay's language to be "funny," for one of the main reasons for hiring her was to improve our English. We all spoke Tshiluba better than we spoke English. In a letter to her family the new teacher wrote:

You never saw anything like the way my missionary children know Tshiluba, and they burst out with the most ridiculous things- half native, half English. They carry things on their heads like the natives too.

She was also aware of the examination she was receiving from her prospective students and their parents:

The parents were nice, but didn't fail to count even the hairs on my head, much less measure the exact height of my skirt from the floor.

Even the Congolese were skeptical of her:

When the natives saw me the other day with the other workers, one of the women wanted to know if I was big enough to be any good.

Miss Holladay was tiny, barely five feet tall, squarely built with short sturdy arms and legs. She strode along, almost like a man, swinging her arms vigorously. She wore her blond hair in a short bob with bangs, and when she laughed, which was frequently, her deep blue eyes crinkled. The funny Virginia accent was there, but we soon stopped giggling and found ourselves also saying "kyah," and "gyah-den." Only when she tried to talk Tshiluba did we howl with laughter. We could teach her a few things about the Congo! She soon let us know how much we had to learn, and in spite of ourselves, we listened and enjoyed. She was close to conquering us.

Central School opened at Lubondai in January 1928, with just three day students. The arrival of the boarding students was delayed until July because a dormitory had to be built. Sid and I, the only ones to go from Mutoto as the Kings were on furlough, were not at all happy to leave home. Sid was only nine years old, and I was not quite eleven. Our parents also did not like the separation, but they felt it was the only solution to our educational needs. While our trunks were being packed, Mother gave us instructions to take care of each other. Sid was to keep my shoes polished, while I would mend his clothes when necessary. I don't remember if Sid kept up his end of the arrangement, but I do know that I did not. When Sid gave me his torn clothes to take care of, I wore them instead of mending them, thus "contaminating" them for him forever.



Lubondai Station



Central School's First Buildings.
The building in the rear is a mud and sticks unit, the building in the foreground is made of sun-dried bricks.



The road to Lubondai

Once we were all there, the entire Central School student body numbered thirteen children, ranging in age from eight to fourteen. The ten boarding students were housed in a temporary dormitory of sun-dried brick with a grass roof. There were two rooms and a bath for the girls on one side, a matron's room in the middle, and one boy's room and bath on the other side. Miss Holladay had a separate little house of her own, but took her meals with us in the dining room attached to the dormitory. The kitchen was in a separate building in the back yard. The dormitory had a long low veranda, extending the entire length of the building and facing a big open yard covered with coarse grass and a few bushes. The yard and all the houses were enclosed in a high fence, and it was soon made clear that our wanderings were restricted. Central School was located at one end on Lubondai Station, on the road to the village of Chief Ntola. We could not go to the village, and most of our associations with the Congolese were confined to the workmen and servants around the school, and to those we saw en masse when we attended the Congolese church on Sunday. Our parents were determined to civilize us in the ways of Ku Mputu.

We did not tame easily. A number of the children had been isolated on their stations and were spoiled by their parents and the Congolese. Bill Washburn, for example, had run around uncurbed at Bulape, where he was the only white boy on the station. He was a VIP among the Congolese because he was supposed to have "rescued" an important chief from a Belgian jail. Another boy resisted wearing shoes or shirts. Several, who had played only with African children, found it difficult to adjust to children they could not boss around as easily.

Since the African part of us was being suppressed, we decided to become as American as possible. Our authority on Ku Mputu was Sanki Stegall, an older girl, lately arrived from the States. From Sanki we dutifully learned the names of Hollywood movie stars, even though few of us had ever seen a movie, and picked up the slang expressions that she said were “in.”

Miss Holladay was not very happy about us taking on popular American culture. She abhorred anything cheap and ordinary, particularly when it came to language and literature. She herself had been raised on the classics and was determined that we would know and love them too. There were very few books on the mission, so she sent word to the States that donations would be welcomed.

On the day a large box of books arrived, we stood around eagerly watching Miss Holladay unpack them. The arrival of any mail, especially from the States, was exciting. As she lifted the first book from the box, our teacher screamed, “Tarzan!”

We crowded closer to look, but she pushed us away and closed the box quickly. With no explanation, Miss Holladay marched directly to the fire burning in the back yard and threw in the whole package. All we were able to learn was that someone had sent us a complete set of books about “Tarzan,” a person who was supposed to have lived in Africa. Miss Holladay was so tight lipped about it that I could not wait to get my hands on a “Tarzan” book. It was some years later that I had the chance to read one, and it was a great disappointment. Tarzan was not nearly so wicked as I had imagined, but very dumb.

The books we were allowed to read were Miss Holladay’s favorites, by such authors as Walter Scott, Charles Dickens and William Shakespeare. Miss Holladay was also fascinated by our knowledge of African lore, and asked us to write down the Congolese “nsuminu” as English themes. Later she collected them, illustrated them with her own drawings and gave them as Christmas presents to her nieces and nephews in the States.

Our school building was a temporary two-room affair with improvised desks. We learned our geography from a globe, which Miss Holladay made from papier-mâché and painted. Her skill at making things with her hands came into use quite often in the various stage productions we gave at the end of each term for our parents. The first play was a shortened version of Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” and it was a great success. Our stage was the long dormitory veranda, decorated with palm branches. Nine year-old Titania (Alice Longenecker) lay on a bower of palm leaves, while Puck (Peggy Stixrud) danced to music from a hand-cranked Victrola. Miss Holladay made all the costumes from unbleached muslin dyed with crepe paper. Bottom, my brother Sid, had a marvelous donkey head made from papier-mâché and old stockings. I had two roles: Hermia in the love scenes, wearing a lovely pink costume, and Moonshine, in a rough sack tunic, carrying a kerosene lantern and leading a mangy little Congolese dog. In later productions, Sid and I were the twins in “Twelfth Night,” and, finally, I had the title role in “Alice in

Wonderland.” Shakespeare became a part of our everyday conversations. Even ten and twelve year-olds found his lines served their thoughts and expressions.

Miss Holladay could not understand our excitement over cars, and the mechanical things she took for granted. They were still new and rare in our experience. By now a few airplanes had come to our part of Congo, and these “great birds” mystified us as much as they did the Africans. One day, as we were all crowded together reciting lessons in various corners of the schoolroom, there was the sound of an airplane outside. Everyone jumped up and ran to the windows. “Sit down!” ordered Miss Holladay. But no one heard her. As the door was locked, we dropped out of the windows, one by one, and stood staring at the sky outside. Not until the plane had finally disappeared did we remember our teacher, who stood shouting at us from the window. We returned to our classroom, but couldn’t possibly explain our action to her. She, too, was baffled, and finally settled on one of her favorite methods of punishment. We were all assigned a large number of lines of poetry to memorize. The selection was, appropriately, “Charge of the Light Brigade.”

Miss McClaren, a nurse recruited temporarily to serve as dormitory matron, was not used to children, and lacked Miss Holladay’s sense of humor. There was no nonsense in her regime. One of her many rules required us to eat everything we were served on the daily menu, including slimy spinach. There was nightly Bible reading and prayers, followed by lengthy selections from Emily Post’s “Etiquette.”

Each boy had to take a turn at pulling out Miss McClaren’s chair and helping her get seated, according to Emily Post’s instruction. Ted Stixrud had a painful experience one day, when he was barefoot and taking his turn at the seating ceremony. Miss McClaren, an amply built woman, descended too soon into the chair, which, with her full weight, came down on Ted’s bare toe.

The girls learned to curtsy, a skill I have never found to be particularly useful. However, we were all proud when Peggy Stixrud curtsied so beautifully to the Queen of Belgium the day we all met the King and Queen at Kaula. The occasion of the visit to Congo, by King Albert and Queen Elizabeth, was the completion of the railroad into the interior of the country. The train carrying the royal couple made stops all along the new route. In recognition of the APCM’s cooperative role in the project, representatives of the mission were invited to meet the king and queen at stops in the Kasai, including one at Kaula, near Lubondai. Central School students went along with the Lubondai delegation, and Peggy Stixrud, the youngest of us, was chosen to present a bouquet of flowers to the queen. Our meeting with the royal couple was brief but memorable. As we arrived at Kaula, just at dusk, we found the train standing there, its lights flooding the little station and the few surrounding buildings. Soon King Albert, a tall man in military dress decked with numerous insignia, and Queen Elizabeth, a slight woman in a flowing white dress, descended from the train and greeted us. After a brief exchange of conversation in French between the couple and the Lubondai missionaries, Peggy presented the flowers to

the queen, beautifully executing a curtsy á la Emily Post. Queen Elizabeth rewarded her with a kiss, earning Peggy, forever after, the title "Peg Leg the Queen's Beloved."

Miss McClaren apparently had her reasons for including in our Emily Post instructions a chapter on "How to Act When You Are Proposed To." This had little meaning for us, but when we heard, after she had returned to the States, that Miss McClaren was getting married, we decided she must have been "practicing up." Mr. and Mrs. McKinnon, a childless couple, succeeded her for a short while. They were less rigid than Miss McClaren, but while we no longer had Emily Post, we endured heavy doses of Bible reading every night, ploughing endlessly through the moanings of the prophets. "Howl, Ye Ships of Tarshish" put me in an uncontrollable fit of giggling one night, causing me and another girl I had infected, to be banished from the room. Things improved considerably after Charlotte McMurray, sister of L.A. McMurray, arrived from the States to take over the matron job. Although we tested her a bit, rubbing red hot pepper pods on her knife and fork in the dining room, she won us over completely when she said we no longer had to eat the dreadful slimy spinach. With no objection from her, we rose from the table, ran out to the garden and chopped down all the spinach plants, a New Zealand variety that even the missionaries disliked. Charlotte McMurray shared Virginia Holladay's sense of humor, and being also from Virginia, the two women had much in common.

Although we were getting used to discipline, and genuinely liked the teachers, we felt called on to test the rules from time to time. In addition to being restricted to the Central School campus, we had strict rules for being in bed with our mosquito nets down and all candles out by certain hours each night. One night I dared the girls in our section of the dormitory to defy the curfew and venture forth into the "tshisuku," an area of tall grass and trees just outside our fence. As evidence of having actually reached the "tshisuku," each girl would bring back a leaf from a certain tree. As well as I can remember, I was the only one to try it, but on my way back, holding my leaf, I was caught by Miss Holladay. She gave me a long and stern lecture about the dangers of such behavior, warning that I could end up as a "juvenile delinquent." Associated with what we had been learning about crime and gangsters in Chicago, I took her warning very seriously...for a while.

On another occasion it was all of the Central School students who got a public reprimand for misbehaving. We were at the Lubondai African service on a Sunday, seated together as a group at the back of the church. One of the missionaries, a large, bald man with a tiny black mustache, was preaching. His poor pronunciation of Tshiluba amused us, but our amusement got out of control when, pointing to the congregation and then to his mustache, he proclaimed, "Wee wee? Me me?" It was a garbling of two Tshiluba words, "Wewe" and "Meme," properly pronounced "Weh-weh" and "Meh-meh," meaning "you and me." As he kept repeating the phrase and pointing to his little mustache, our laughter got so loud that the missionary stopped, dead still. "Until the white children stop their noise," he said for all to hear, "I will not continue my sermon."

Items and notes in a Memory Book I kept erratically at Central School bring to mind some things of special importance and concern for my schoolmates and me at that time. For example:

Rarities from Ku Mputu

-A Wrigley Juicy Fruit Chewing Gum Wrapper- "I chewed it for four days."

- Paper from a candy box- "Out of a box of candy which Elizabeth McKee gave me for my birthday."

Special Events

-A leaf- "A leaf from my visit to the King of Belgium, found in my shoe!"

-Snapshot of me as Hermia, and scrap of pink cloth- "from my costume in "Midsummer Night's Dream."

Student Relations

-Many homemade valentines from schoolmates (girls only), with poems and sentimental messages, several signed by the creator with the words, "After many hardships and troubles."

Because most of us were so young, and because the girls outnumbered the boys 8 to 5, there was little evidence of romantic interest between the students, except for some apparent pining after my brother Sid by some of the older girls, even though Sid was years younger. When Sid, who abhorred anything "sissy," continued to ignore them, the girls turned to me. Aware of their advantage in being my seniors, they told me they would like me better if I could persuade Sid to "kiss" them. Anxious to please, I approached Sid on the matter, but he would have none of it.

In our free hours at Central School we enjoyed many good times: picnics at a nearby dam, native "chop" at the Cleveland's, staff-accompanied bicycle rides out into the surrounding grass covered plains, where we sometimes gathered beautiful orchids. Sometimes we made visits with the Lubondai missionaries to Chief Ntola's village. An intelligent and dignified man, respected by his people and by the Belgian Administration, Chief Ntola was a good friend of the APCM. He was not a Christian himself, but had no objection to having his numerous wives and children attend the mission schools, or even get baptized. The chief was always cordial to us students.



Central School kids, out for a bike ride.

After the first year, the school schedule was similar to that in the States, with the school year beginning around the first of August and ending in late May, with several weeks' break at Christmas. A few of the missionaries who had their own cars visited their children at Lubondai occasionally. Our parents, who neither drove nor owned a car, visited us very infrequently. Except for vacation periods, our main contact with the family at Mutoto was through the mail, still delivered by runners from each station. "Mail Day" was a big event each week, signaled by the arrival of a barefoot man in blue "mission cloth" shorts and shirt, and wearing a red fez cap. Certain days were designated for the arrival of the mailman from each station, Luebo, Bulape, Bibanga, or Mutoto, but storms and other problems could cause delays and changes. However erratic his schedule might be, Sid and I were always excited to see the Mutoto mailman unload his bag with letters from our parents, occasionally from Henry, and sometimes a box of fudge, peanut brittle, or some other treat Mother had prepared for us.

As vacation time approached, Central School students could be heard counting the days in a song:

*Ten more days till vacation
Then we'll go to the station
Back to civilization
The car will carry us home*

Chapter 9

Vacations

It was always exciting to get back to Mutoto, and a happy reunion with our parents and brothers. Ntumba, Muamba and the other Congolese helpers seemed glad to see us too. Even Tshiamalenge came forth with some special treats from the kitchen, such as my favorite salmon croquettes.

Our parent's work went on as usual during much of our vacation period, but the family was also able to spend some time together at Lake Munkamba, an increasingly popular vacation spot for APCM missionaries. Only a few hours journey from Mutoto, the spring-fed lake was clean and clear, surrounded by tall grass and trees, and, on one side, some cottages built by the missionaries. The only villages in the area were a small workmen's village some distance from the cottages, and another one across the lake. At that time, except for the workmen, few Africans were seen anywhere close to the lake. Legend had it that there had once been a large village at Munkamba, which had been suddenly inundated by the lake. Fearing that the spirits of the drowned villagers were still there, Congolese in the area avoided the lake.



Lake Munkamba at sunset

For us it was a nice crocodile-free place to go swimming and boating. Bill Worth had built a little sailboat called the "Minx", which we all enjoyed. Sometimes the men would go hunting for guinea fowl, ducks or antelope. On one of these trips,

when they brought back an antelope, Dad seemed more sorrowful than triumphant about killing “the pretty thing.”

Although Dad and Mother spent most of their working time at Mutoto, they did get out in the villages occasionally, sometimes together and sometimes with other missionaries, to observe the work of those whom they had trained at MBS. There were a few times when they took one of us along. In a letter home, Dad wrote of a trip with Henry, the brother who was to spend so many of his later years in Africa “on the road:”

I enjoyed my trip to Lubondai. I took Henry with me and went on a short evangelistic tour first, McKinnon meeting me at one of the native villages when I had finished the trip. Henry was a lot of company, but he certainly was into everything he could get into. With no other children to play with, he had to run the little native children around, and they thought he was awfully funny. When they laughed, that made him worse. He seemed to enjoy the road very much.

Another trip took Dad through the area of the new railroad, where differences in African lifestyles were becoming apparent:

We covered quite a great deal of ground, and preached on an average of three times, sometimes four times, a day...We followed the route of the new railway for quite a while too, and I saw something I thought I would never see in this part of the country...several trains, most of which were loaded with rails and railway material...The roadbed isn't firm yet, and passenger service is not yet so comfortable as it will be later... When in active operation there will be regular sleeping car service and railway dining cars, of course nothing like so luxurious as our Pullman service at home, but very good for Africa.

We got to the Gare de Luluabourg, where the railway is putting its shops, and there we stayed for three days looking into a site for a chapel and an evangelist's house. We saw many old native friends, many of them getting, for a native, very high salaries, much higher than we can ever pay. We were installed at the village where one of our elders is staying for the present, a sort of presiding elder, who goes up and down the railway site encouraging the Christians, and looking out for them...Smith and I tried it one night together in the house of the evangelist, a temporary affair he has built to take care of his family until he can construct a better one. My head touched the smoky ceiling and it was altogether so uncomfortable I had to seek other quarters. These little 10 by 10 huts with their smoky interiors, and infested with bed-bugs, made an evangelistic trip an interesting affair, I can assure you...



The Train Depot at Luluabourg

While Dad and his colleague, Plumer Smith, were at Luluabourg, they were surprised to get a message, hand delivered by a Congolese boy, from Motte Martin, who had come in on a train from Cape Town, South Africa. According to the account Martin gave his friends, he had been in Cape Town with his family, and decided to leave them there while he attempted, against all advice, the train trip to Congo. It had taken him ten days, with many changes, sleeping on top of boxes in the freight cars most of the way. "Ordinarily he is one of the neatest men I have ever seen," wrote Dad, "but he certainly looked seedy then."

A letter Mother wrote, in October 1929, to Presbyterian supporters in the States, gave some details of another itinerary, during which she was particularly impressed with the Africans' consuming desire for education:

How I wish I could have taken you with us about two months ago, when I had the rare treat of itinerating among about 11 of our 150 Mutoto outstations. As my main job is teaching, there rarely ever seems to be a convenient time for me to go itinerating, but this time I decided to just drop things and run away. So, leaving my afternoon women's school in charge of our native Pastor Kabongo, Mr. Crane, David and I left for a two weeks' journey. As neither of us drives a car, we had Mr. Miller take us in old "Marse Henry" to the edge of the section we were to visit. We had previously sent camp beds, bathtub, trunk, two boxes of food, etc. In the car we tucked fresh bread, a basket of eggs, boiled water and fruit. Upon reaching our section, the car turned back, and

left us to travel slowly between villages where we had work. Mr. Crane was to use his bicycle, while David and I were to ride in a two-wheeled donkey cart pulled by native porters.

After we reached our first village, ate our lunch and set up beds for the night in our native superintendent's two-room mud house, which he had vacated for us, we began work. Service was held, after which the candidates for baptism were examined; this took most of the afternoon. After supper the crowd gathered for another preaching service, after which we sang with them and talked informally...Mr. Crane with the men and I with the women. Next morning, after prayers and baptism of the new Christians, we had the superintendent give us a sample of his school. We divided there, Mr. Crane watching him while I went on to a nearby village to see an evangelist give a similar demonstration. Not having seen much schoolwork in the outstations, I was shocked at the poor attempt, but before my journey ended I realized that this school was one of the best in this little section. Their reading was not so bad, but when I saw the little, almost naked children rubbing their bare feet on the dirt floor, I wondered what was up. They were preparing a smooth place to write on, as they had no slates, no paper, nor pencils. Some wrote well, too, with a small stick or just a finger. I'm afraid if I had no more black boards or other equipment than they have I would give it up as a hopeless task. However, we are amazed to see how well trained many of these boys and girls are when they come into our station schools...

Sunday, the church was so full that I held an overflow meeting of about seventy children on the veranda of our house. After church I had nearly a full church of only women and girls. In every village I had a separate meeting for women. The door is wide open for the gospel. They are beginning to be allowed to come in to attend our station schools...

You would be amused to see the gifts we received in each village, such as eggs, onions, chickens, tomatoes, sugar cane and peanuts. All these things helped us in our housekeeping, which was a rather light palaver on the road. We cooked on a sheet of iron with several holes cut in the top.

After ten days visiting, teaching, preaching, talking, being stared at by the hour, packing and unpacking, we were glad to be met by the Cousars and driven over to Lubondai for a three days' rest and visit to our children who are there in school...

With the establishment of Central School, especially after the move to Lubondai, contacts with our old African playmates at Mutoto were more and more infrequent. During vacation periods we did see some of them, especially Kavulu, who was more and more eager to talk with us about things he was learning. A superior student, and having finished all the courses offered in the schools, he was now teaching at the MBS Middle (Women's) School, while also continuing special studies of his own in French and other subjects. Music was one of his particular interests, and under instruction from Mrs. Worth, he could now play a few hymns on the little folding organ. Although everyone recognized Kavulu as being very intelligent, he did not

get as much missionary attention as did some of the other African staff, such as Kanyinda. Both Kavulu and Kanyinda were under Mother's supervision, but it was Kanyinda on whom she principally depended, and to whom she gave the most responsibility. This could have been partially due to differences in their personalities. Kavulu was quite outspoken, while Kanyinda was modest with gentle manners. Kanyinda was also a little older, and already married to Ngoia, Pastor Kabongo's daughter. Another possible explanation was that while Kanyinda came from the favored Baluba group, Kavulu was from a smaller group known as the Bena Koshi. The Chief of the Bena Koshi village from which Kavulu came, was rumored to be a cannibal, and the missionaries had the impression that the people there were somewhat degenerate. Thus, however good his efforts and intentions, Kavulu bore the burden of his ethnic and village background. Physically the two young men were quite different. Kanyinda was small, and like many Baluba, very black, with rather fine features. Kavulu was of medium build, brown-skinned with a reddish tinge, and had a somewhat pointed, expressive face. Whatever Mother and the other missionaries thought of him, Sid and I both liked Kavulu and got to know him pretty well. He no longer joked with us about Ku Mputu, but sought to learn as much about it as possible. He even asked us to bring him back something from there.

Chapter 10

High School in Hickory

Our 1930-1931 furlough, coinciding with my first year of high school, was again spent in Hickory, in an apartment near the Dixon aunts and our brother Charles. At the high school, just across the road from the Dixon home, our Aunt Rosa Lee was my algebra teacher. I tried to remain as anonymous as possible in her class, but when I found out that she was one of the most popular teachers in the school, I was really proud to be related to her. Rosa Lee not only made algebra interesting, but she also really cared about her students, ready to help even the slowest of them gain some confidence in the subject. After Central School's single classroom, the big high school was at first a bit frightening, every hour the bell signaling a rush from one classroom to another, each time with a different teacher. I liked some of the classes very much, especially English, and Latin, which I was learning for the first time. In a home economics class I learned something about cooking and sewing, but had problems with the electrical equipment. Unable to control the fast sewing machine, I spent most of the time ripping out whatever stitching I had managed.

Besides our brother Charles, some of the old schoolmates and friends from our previous furlough were there to welcome us. Our Central School experience had also better prepared us for Ku Mputu this time. There were still occasions, though, when our Congo upbringing set us apart as "different." Charles, now in his early teens, and unused to sharing space with so many lively siblings, sometimes let go his feelings about us. Nine year-old Henry, full of curiosity and always on the run, particularly annoyed him. Fed up one day by Henry's perpetual motion, Charles yelled at him, "Oh, go sit on a tack!" Henry immediately went to one of the aunts and asked her for a tack. When she asked him why he needed it, he solemnly replied: "Charles told me to sit on a tack."

Even more characteristic was Henry's response when, on another occasion, Charles pushed him away, accidentally causing him to fall and cut his head. "No Charles," Henry replied to his brother's remorseful apology, "It was my fault. I was fooling around."

Charles also had uncomplimentary things to say about me, particularly the "big steps" I took when I walked. Anxious to please, and not embarrass him in front of his friends, I began measuring my steps by lines in the sidewalk, trying to achieve a more lady-like gait. The only one of us to escape criticism for our foreign ways was four-year old David, adored by all for his beautiful blue eyes, long eyelashes, and his sweet disposition. Some years later, when Charles accused him of lacking a sense of humor, David went in search of a joke book.

Despite a few such incidents, we actually had a good time with our brother and knew he was proud of us. The whole family spent some time together, when our parents rented a cottage at Montreat, the church conference ground, for a couple of weeks. Friends had a hard time finding us because the trail to the cottage was not well marked, so Dad put up a sign lettered "Crane's Nest," above a drawing of a nest full of cranes, large and small.

While we were in Hickory Dad got the whole family excited about the possibility of getting a car for us to take back to the Congo, not by purchase, which was out of the question, but by winning a contest advertised by "Tom's Toasted Peanuts." All you had to do, he told us with a barely concealed grin, was write the winning jingle praising "Tom's Toasted Peanuts." For several days he jotted down jingle after jingle, lavishly lauding the peanuts, and read them out loud to us. Whether or not he actually mailed them in, I don't know, but for a while we children had real hopes of getting a family car through our father's undisputable prowess in poetry.

While we were on furlough we got some sad news from Mutoto. Nina Farmer, the nurse who had taken such good care of us at the time of Dad's accident, was dead. Her death had come rather suddenly after an emergency operation. A letter from Plumer Smith gave details and a description of her funeral:

She has always been so well and happy that we can hardly believe that she is gone. She was laid out in her home. By daylight, the native friends began coming and were allowed to pass through her home and take their last look at the best friend that many of them had ever had. Perhaps 3000 passed through. At ten she was put into the coffin made of native wood, covered with a white cloth. The coffin was then placed on benches in front of her home under a large mango tree. There we had the service in which both missionaries and natives shared. Six missionaries then took the coffin to our cemetery, ¼ mile away, which looks eastward across a beautiful valley. (I hope to be buried there some day). While the grave was being filled, the natives sang songs, a prayer was said by a native, and the Lord's Prayer, in concert, finished the service. The missionary ladies put their beautiful wreathes of flowers on her grave. Some natives brought a wicker crown, covered with flowers. Ndai Naomi, a great friend of Miss Farmer, brought her a flower and placed it on the grave. We had performed our last respects for our beloved friend.

Because Central School at Lubondai still had not established a high school division, my parents were in something of a dilemma about where I would be going to school for the next three years. They wanted to keep me in Africa, and so were considering a boarding school for girls in South Africa. One look at the catalog convinced me it was not a school I wanted to attend. Along with some very unattractive uniforms, the girls going there also had to wear long black stockings. Fortunately the South African option was ruled out by another plan. While we were still in Hickory, my parents and the Kellersbergers, another APCM couple with a daughter my age, communicated with each other about our mutual problem. Since the death of Dr.

Kellersberger's first wife, his two daughters had been living with relatives in the States. Dr. Kellersberger had recently remarried, and was planning to bring his daughters and new wife, Julia Lake, back to the Congo. At the discussion in Hickory, it was agreed that Dr. Kellersberger's wife would teach their older daughter Winifred and me, together, at Bibanga, covering all the high school work we would need to prepare us both for college in the States. This meant, of course, that I would have to go to Bibanga station, but this was a lot closer to Mutoto than South Africa.

During our furlough in Hickory, our parents were called on frequently to talk about their work in the Congo. Occasionally us kids were asked to share the stage with them. Our schoolmates and other friends, such as those in the Girl Scout troop I joined, sometimes asked us questions about Congo, but they were so ignorant it often became rather tiresome. Henry, who had made a lot of friends, developed a short cut, which made him very popular. Instead of trying to explain how things really were, he actually built up the stereotypes.

"Yes," he would say, "we have a lot of leopards and lions in our backyard all the time." Going on from there, he invented exciting stories. By the time we left Hickory to return to the Congo, Henry was easily the best-known member of the family. In a five-year diary, a going-away present from my scout troop, most of my first entries were about Henry:

Before leaving Hickory;

Henry told all his friends that he was leaving at 7:30 Tuesday morning. He also left his books with a boy to sell.

Just about all packed. Henry ran off tonight to see the free show.

On the train to New York;

Henry tried to wash his face in the finger bowl!

Aside from Henry's antics, my diary noted some highlights from the return trip, including stops: "In London, where we visited the Tower of London and other historic spots;" "in Antwerp, where we bought our hats for Congo...all Scout hats;" "a lovely day in Holland;" "in Lisbon, Portugal, where everybody was carrying fish, and most of the women were dressed somewhat like the natives."



The S.S. Leopoldville, #5

We were travelling home with several other APCM families on the S.S. Leopoldville, the same name as the ship that brought my parents to the Congo in 1912. This was the 5th reincarnation of the Leopoldville, however, built in 1929, so everything was still brand new. (This same ship was outfitted as a troop transporter for the British in WWII, and was sunk by a torpedo while carrying 2200 troops to Cherbourg on December 24, 1944. They lost 808 men.)

At Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, the Leopoldville docked at the same time as another Belgian liner, the S.S. Albertville, carrying APCM missionaries returning from Congo. We all had a reunion in port. Nearing the equator, I had noted in my diary, "As there are so few 'new' passengers on board, they won't celebrate crossing the equator with the dunking, etc., as usual." Instead, everyone went to the Captain's Dinner dressed in costume.

Due, possibly, to a lack of discipline, or even more to lack of space for details, I stopped the daily entries in the diary before we reached Matadi, picking it up only sporadically afterwards, to record things I especially wanted to remember.

Writing to home supporters about the same trip, Dad spoke first of the "sadness of farewell," especially, "the parting between us and our oldest boy, the keenest and most poignant sorrow of all." He then went on to give many details about the trip, "the quickest we have ever made to Congo, just 6 weeks altogether." Other changes

from earlier trips were surprising, such as the small number of passengers on the Belgian liner, and a very different reception in the Congo:

Here we were confronted with signs of what we had heard about all along...the financial crisis in the Congo. This has resulted, we had been told about, and found to be entirely true, in quite a number of white people having to leave the country. Instead of the usual crowd of white people on the docks greeting the incoming steamer, there were a mere handful of people. Our own almost empty vessel, the fewness of the white people in comparison with other times, and the general spirit of depression that seemed to fill the very atmosphere itself, spoke rather eloquently of a world situation that has no real cause save in human selfishness and, to my mind, in the desire of God to bring men to higher thoughts than that of acquisition of wealth...We were told that every previous Belgian vessel had gone home full to overflowing, but those returning to the Congo were quite as empty as ours.

Yet, within the Congo, life for foreigners was easier, at least as far as travel was concerned. Dad was most impressed with the improvement in the trip between Matadi and Leopoldville, now accomplished in just one day. The trip also featured a restaurant car serving hot food and iced mineral water, and a river trip on a new Belgian steamer, the "Berwinne." For economic reasons the APCM's "Lapsley" had been sold. Food on the "Berwinne," which connected with the Kasai railway line at Port Francqui, was also a nice surprise:

With riverboats we always associated hot, uncomfortable cabins, with a diet consisting very largely of goat meat and potatoes. The billy goats that were destined for the good boat "Berwinne," are still baa-ing peacefully on their native heaths. We had as good food as I have ever eaten on the river; fresh beef from the refrigerator or cold storage, fresh vegetables, and plenty of good water. No goat meat and a minimum of potatoes. The Belgians are very fond of a meat preparation that they call "American beef-steak," but to my mind, an offense to all good Americans. It is raw meat, chopped fine, with a liberal amount of mustard mixed in, and a raw egg broken over the top. Well, we did not even have that affliction on the "Berwinne".

In terms of travel arrangements, the only disappointment was the train from Port Francqui to Luluabourg:

We had heard so much of the comfort of it that we were disappointed to find ourselves in an old car that must have been in use on the Cape-to-Cairo route at the very beginning of travel there. The dust of the dry season had covered the train both inside and out. The windows were down, and we were in such heat that a good Romanist might have thought he was spending a moment in purgatory. The beds in the First Class compartments are larger and more comfortable, so we occupied two First Class compartments. These beds run across the compartment instead of lengthwise as on our Pullmans. One of the Pullman porters would have laughed to see the native boy take the better part of an hour to make up six beds, but he finally got them made and

the children were simply delighted. It was a novel experience for them as well as for us. Thus passed the night...

Two missionaries were waiting with cars at Luluabourg to take the family to Mutoto, where we were welcomed royally by our American and African friends.

As the latest arrivals from Ku Mputu, we had the last word on how things were “over there,” but again it was Henry who was the authority. One day he came flying through the house, followed by a gang of children. They gathered around the table on the back porch where Henry set out a number of glasses and some limes. He sliced the limes in half with a large knife. “We are going to have sodas,” he announced, ordering the children to squeeze lime juice into the glasses and fill them partially with water. Then, as each child stood waiting, Henry took a box of bicarbonate of soda and dumped a generous spoonful into each glass. They all watched wide-eyed as the foaming liquid spilled over to the floor. “Drink it!” Henry shouted. “It’s a soda, just like you get in America!” Everyone declared it was wonderful, and the loud belches confirmed it.

Chapter 11

The Depression

The selling of the “Lapsley”, the little steamer which had plied up and down the river for thirty years, was but one of the many changes for the APCM, due in part to the economic crisis, but also to other factors. With the new Belgian steamers, and greater access to supplies through the trading posts, the mission steamer had become obsolete and too costly to operate. Lusambo, which had been established primarily as a transport station for the APCM, was transferred to the Methodist Mission.

The spread of the depression in the United States substantially reduced contributions of the home churches to the APCM, and put extra burdens on the already overtaxed missionaries and Congolese associated with the mission. However, in spite of this, the work went on with even greater commitment of the Congolese. Referring to the depression, Dad wrote:

Every day brings a needless reminder that we are in its throes. The natives have nothing like the amount of money they once had, to spend on books, in giving to the church and for helping us with the work. This too will pass, for surely we are on the eve of some great spiritual awakening. The natives seem just as much interested in the Gospel message as ever.

Citing some statistics of the last Church year, 1931, he noted:

- 1) Almost 2500 natives baptized, in spite of increased and more rigid requirements for admission into our Church.*
- 2) Native contributions (purely native, not a cent of missionary money included), amounted to \$5432, approximately \$300 more than previous record.*
- 3) More calls for teachers and evangelists than ever at three of our stations.*

The real significance, he added, was this:

What proves, to my mind, the stability of the work, is the fact that in spite of a wholesale reduction in income, our native pastors and teachers are still at their posts preaching the Gospel. With the recent addition of another cut of 10%, some of our departments have been cut 62% in their funds, leaving us 38 francs to do the work that 100 francs had to do before. In the face of this fact, we missionaries would have been

ashamed not to get a cut ourselves; there was frank and sincere rejoicing in our ranks when we received notice that our own salaries would be cut 10%. Some of our missionaries, most of them, I'm quite sure, had already put more than 10% of their salaries into the work. Our 10% cut prevents us from doing quite so much as we would have wished, but even at that, the missionaries are trying to take a part of the load, as much as possible.

More buildings had been erected at Mutoto in our absence, but the Morrison Bible School was crowded beyond its limits. There were 85 men in classrooms built for 50, the industrial training building was converted to classrooms for the Women's School and higher elementary school, and farm buildings were converted into much needed dormitories. As Dad wrote, in sheer numbers, MBS had grown tremendously:

We have 250 men in the regular Bible School, and 234 women in the Women's School. With the children in their families, we have about 800 native peoples... Our graduating class will send out 41 men this year, the best-trained class of preachers we have yet turned out!

The work is flourishing in spite of the cut. Perhaps God means for us to trust more to Him and not to things. I have thought often of the statement of the native leaders when news of the cut came: "Cut out things, but do not cut out people."

Chapter 12

Bibanga

Soon after we got back from furlough in 1931, Sid and Henry went off to Central School, and I went to Bibanga to continue high school with Winifred Kellersberger, under the tutelage of her new stepmother. We decided to call our two-pupil school "Agnes Scott Prep," ASP for short, since both Winifred and I planned to go to Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, after we graduated. Mrs. Kellersberger herself was a graduate of this college, and for me there were the family associations, as Grandfather Crane had chaired the college's Board of Trustees and several of Dad's sisters had attended the school. To be sure we covered the necessary requirements for college entrance, Mrs. Kellersberger made special arrangements with Agnes Scott to send us tests from time to time.

I lived in the Kellersberger home, but took my meals at different missionary homes each month. Our classes were held on a regular schedule, which was often interrupted by the sudden appearance of visitors to Bibanga station. Many of them were Belgians, or other Europeans seeking medical attention from Dr. Kellersberger, who, in addition to his medical credentials for the APCM, was a "médecin agréé," a licensed colonial government doctor. The APCM doctors, in general, were far better trained than most of the European doctors in the Congo. In addition to his many duties at the Bibanga hospital, Dr. Kellersberger was spending much of his time developing a pilot program for treatment of lepers at a camp near Bibanga. Many other health problems, such as flu, smallpox, sleeping sickness, malaria, yaw, and hookworm, had so preoccupied the overworked APCM medical personnel that they were unable to give much attention to the Hansen's disease, or leprosy, which afflicted and made outcasts of so many people in the Kasai. Dr. Kellersberger's pioneer work eventually led to his becoming General Secretary of the American Leprosy Mission.

Although Julia Lake Kellersberger had considerable experience working for the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education in the States, she was not a trained schoolteacher. Following guidelines from Agnes Scott College, and using whatever textbooks were available, however, she provided the discipline and guidance we needed. I will be forever grateful to her for teaching me, through English Composition, to become more aware of the special world in which I was living. Congo was new, both to her and to her stepdaughter Winnie, who had been in the States since she was four years old. They were both constantly excited and surprised by things that were very familiar and ordinary to me. Like Miss Holladay at Central School, Mrs. Kellersberger had us write our English themes on Congo subjects, and she also instructed us to keep notes on things we observed as particularly interesting. Inclined, herself, to effusiveness and hyperbole, even in

everyday speech, she found my writings too strictly factual. "Make the monkeys screech!" she suggested, after reading one of my pieces. "But they didn't!" I replied. Gradually, though, I began to recognize what might be considered special to Ku Mputu people. Even more important, and knowing I would soon have to leave the Congo for college in the U.S., I became aware of people and things I had taken for granted, suddenly realizing how much I would miss them.

Bibanga station, about 140 miles south of Mutoto, and in the Baluba heartland, was on a hill over 3000 feet high, overlooking the vast Lubilashi River valley. The station itself was beautiful, full of tall palms, acacia trees with their orange and red flowers, and fruit bearing mango, guava and citrus trees. Paths through the station were lined with poinsettia, lantana, and other flowering bushes. Although it was one of the newer stations, the scarcity of lumber in the area had ruled out the usual temporary mud and stick buildings. All the buildings, missionary homes, hospital, and church, were made of brick.

One thing I particularly enjoyed at the Kellersberger home was the opportunity to take piano lessons from Mrs. Kellersberger, on a real piano. Pianos of any kind were rare in the Congo because they did not stand up well in the climate. At Mutoto, I had been given a few lessons with Mrs. Worth on a miniature piano called a Dulcitone, but it could not compare with the Kellerberger's full sized upright piano. The lessons and practice on the piano were really fun, even though, as a raw beginner, I was not able to make real music as could Winnie. Winnie had had considerable piano training in the States, and not only played compositions from sheet music, but also made up pieces of her own. Many of our free hours were spent with her at the keyboard, and me as an appreciative audience of one.

Periodically Winnie and I produced a one-sheet newspaper of limited circulation, called "Impy Inklings," the official organ of the "Agnes Scott Prep School." Giving us some practice in both writing and typing, we covered a wide range of subjects, as illustrated in samples below of my own contributions under the pen name of "Salmon Croquettes:"

ASP Students Losing Their Heads

Yes, it is only too true! Memorizing Civics and Geography, nightmaring over History, etc.-thus the students of A.S.P. work, work and work, all the day long – also the night. There is a reason, however – EXAMINATIONS!!

As the teacher says, "You may ask me the questions now, but when time for examinations comes, I'm going to ask them. Dolefully, with ghostly fears and trembles, the poor pupils crack their heads with pencils, tear up paper, and THINK, & THINK!!! It all comes to nothing, however. Nearly always this sad picture closes with the girls giggling over each other's art display.

-Salmon Croquettes

Amiable Radio Installed At Bibanga

The first words that the McKee's new radio pronounced were "I LOVE YOU!" It is not determined yet to whom this was said, as there was quite a crowd gathered around the radio to hear its first words.

-Salmon Croquettes

The radio referred to was the first one on the station, bringing in messages from overseas. My diary, resurrected for important events, had several entries related to the transmissions we listened to at the McKee home:

Heard Moscow bell strike twelve, heard Big Ben in London, also America and France...Heard Cathedral music from France this afternoon...

Mr. McKee heard over the radio that Lindbergh has crashed, but couldn't hear any more.

The false rumor about the Lindbergh crash was later the subject of an article in "Impy Inklings."

Another event meriting an entry in my diary was a very exciting "crocodile hunt" Winnie and I made with Earl King, one of the Bibanga missionaries. Actually the "hunt" was already over. Mr. King had already killed a crocodile and a hippopotamus at the Lubilashi River, and he invited us, with Mrs. Kellersberger's permission, to go back with him to see the aftermath. By the time we got to the river, the Africans were already cutting up the crocodile and taking off its skin. In its stomach they found a number of copper bracelets, and other things that belonged to human victims of the crocodile. We had always been warned not to go too close to the river banks, because these treacherous reptiles could rise without warning from the water and whip out their tails to pull in anyone within reach.

As at Mutoto, there were all the activities within the mission family, and also those with the Congolese. Winnie and I both helped sometimes in the Sunday school and church services. Occasionally we attended weddings of some of the girls we knew at the Girl's Home. Our routine was often interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Europeans seeking medical help from Dr. Kellersberger. Mrs. Kellersberger hastily arranged for more places to be set at the dining table, and all of us went to get the station guest house ready, making beds, putting up the mosquito nets, hauling water for baths, setting out the bathroom supplies, glasses and drinking water. The guests, who might be from Belgium, France, England, Portugal or elsewhere, were colonial agents, traders, missionaries, adventurers or anyone who may have found himself in our part of the country. One I particularly remember was a rather charming Frenchman, who divulged little about himself, other than that he was from the Montmartre section of Paris. According to some of the missionaries, Montmartre was an area of heavy crime and "bad" people, and there was a suggestion that this

man was an escaped convict, perhaps even a murderer. In any case, he was, for me at least, an exciting guest, and he did us no harm. As happened at many other stations, including Mutoto, some of the guests became a burden because of too-long stays and inconsiderate demands. One British couple was highly critical of the way Americans prepared tea. On the other hand, there were some very nice guests, thoughtful and often helpful. During her stay at Bibanga, a charming Belgian woman gave French lessons to Winnie and me. The missionary visitors included those from other APCM stations, and other denominations like the Methodists, as well as “independent” missionaries. The latter came out to Congo on “faith,” with no support from any particular church, claiming a “call from God to preach the Gospel to the heathen.” Often poorly educated and extremely naïve about conditions in Africa, many of these missionaries succumbed to diseases and other ills, and had to be sent home. APCM missionaries frequently had to assume a large part of their care, sometimes providing for their return transportation.

At Bibanga, as when I was at Central School, I looked forward every week to the arrival of the Mutoto mailman, or a car with news from home. Both Dad and Mother wrote family news, sometimes including a laboriously written “letter” from David, the only child left at home. They also wrote about things that were happening in and around Mutoto. In one letter Mother expressed both amazement and wonder about an invasion of locusts:

Yesterday we saw a wonderful sight, a huge drove of locusts. I don't know whether you say “drove of locusts, or what is proper. Anyway, there were millions passed over the big ravine back of the Worth's house, MBS, etc. It looked like a huge shower of rain. We feel rather uneasy about the result of the visit. People say they lay their eggs, and in 5 or 6 months the number increases greatly and ruins the crops. I hope this won't come when times are already hard with the natives. To lose their food crops would be a huge calamity. I never saw them before, and the natives were wildly excited. I had just dismissed all the women except the circle leaders, but I had to let them go at once.

My parents' letters also included some of the personal counseling they were unable to give me directly...reminders about curbing my temper, being considerate of others, refraining from complaints or criticism of others. Mother was particularly concerned about my behavior at the different homes where I was taking my meals:

Hope you are punctual for your meals and will be a thoughtful, helpful boarder. Mrs. Kelly says everybody has nice things to say about you and I want them to keep saying them. Hope you aren't putting your arms on the table anymore.

One of my Bibanga “family” apparently thought I was taking advantage of my parents' absence when I took some rides on a donkey that was on the station, but Mother's reaction was only amusement:

I don't know why Miss F. thought I was worried about the donkey riding. I had a good laugh over it and gave no further thought to it. She has an idea that when you are

near me you are a meek, calm little lady, and when you get away you are another person. Good Night! I've known you too long to think that. I know you, don't I?

Dad was less concerned about my public behavior than about my school achievement, always a priority in our family. In a school of two, with round the clock attention of the teacher, it was hardly possible to “goof off,” even if I had wanted to, and my reports were generally good. In a letter soon after I had started school at Bibanga, Dad wrote that a severe rainstorm had flooded our house, breaking the dry season. Coming on a Sunday, when the servants were off-duty, he, Mother and a new Missionary nurse living with them temporarily, were literally wading through the house removing “four big, ten gallon buckets” of water. Little David, however, seemed to enjoy the fun, and just wanted to wade in the water.

My parents rarely came to Bibanga while I was there. Since my birthday in July occurred during the Bibanga school term, family celebrations had to be confined to birthday letters and simple gifts sent through the mailmen or travelling missionaries. In his letter for the occasion of my fifteenth birthday, in 1932, my father wrote, “Shall try to send you a franc for every year of your age, but if I don't remember it, let me know: though just what you can spend money for down there I don't know.” In the same 1932 letter, Dad wrote of the first meeting of the Bible Revision Committee, a group of missionaries and educated Africans like Sende Joseph, working together to improve the Morrison-Vinson translation of the Bible into Tshiluba. Two missionaries at Bibanga, George McKee and Vernon Anderson, came to Mutoto for the meeting:

We began our preliminary meetings this morning and afternoon and we got along very slowly. I can readily see how it will easily take 10 years for us to do the work of revision when we spend a whole day determining how to translate certain Greek expressions that are difficult to render. Mr. McMurray's kindness in furnishing us each a cup of tea this afternoon saved me from disgracing the committee by falling asleep. What little knowledge of Hebrew and Greek I have retained from seminary days will have to be recalled now to help out. Fortunately, Mr. McMurray is fresher on it than the rest of us.

Since the Bible Revision Committee often met at vacation periods, either on our front porch at Mutoto, or at Lake Munkamba, I had some opportunity to see them working. The men poured hour after hour over the original Bible texts in Hebrew and Greek, various English and French translations, as well as the Morrison-Vinson Tshiluba translation, seeking, word by word, the closest Tshiluba match. It was a work that continued beyond the ten years predicted by my father, and even beyond his death in 1953. One of the committee meetings was held at Bibanga in 1933, providing the only opportunity for Dad to come while I was there. Although we were constantly reminded that family separations were necessary because of the priority placed on our parents' work and on our education, in a letter he wrote after his return to Mutoto, Dad expressed, as he and my mother often did, the pain it caused them:

If I could have brought you with me, I would have been very much gladder to reach home, but leaving you was very hard. I have sorely missed you and I am so glad that I got this chance to see you at Bibanga. The work on the Bible Revision Committee is hard and very exacting, but it had its compensations this year at least.

My vacation from Bibanga did not coincide exactly with Central School vacation, but we did have some time at Mutoto when the whole family was together. As indicated in a letter Dad wrote to me soon after Sid, Henry and I had gone back to school following one of the vacations at home, the long separations had somewhat mellowed our relationships with each other:

We miss all of you so much. We enjoyed having all of you here more than we can express. Until your last few days together I think you children improved in your attitude towards each other. Perhaps next time there will be no wars at all between you and Sid.

My “wars” with Sid were generally due to differences in temperament. I was given to emotional outbursts and impulsive behavior, while Sid was more restrained and observant of the “rules.” His very restraint and model behavior, much commented on by the larger missionary family, often drove me to provocation, but when he got mad his response was non-violent. He won, in the end, by announcing, “I won’t hit you because you are a girl.” In spite of his disdain for the female sex, the girls at Central School continued to pursue him. Now that I had no part in it, Sid, then 13 years old, poured out his frustration in letters to me at Bibanga. Assured by one of my letters that I did not take seriously the rumors of his submission to the romantic advances of one particularly ardent pursuer, Sid wrote in some detail about his dilemma:

I’m glad you didn’t believe the “bollyrot” you heard about me. It is exactly the opposite from the truth. I did no such thing as fall for M...She has a picture of me in her prayer book, which I thought you had given to her. She wrote a note to herself not long ago, and accidentally left it in a book I had lent to her. When she gave the book back I found it, and these are the contents of it as I can remember:

“Oh well, M..., you’ve got to win against L, A, V, K and the rest who like Sid. You know you love him just heaps. Well, I’ll do my best but it’s no use. He hates you and you know it.”

That shows how silly she is! I’d like to give her a piece of my mind, but I don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings. She has asked P... several times to ask me which of the girls I like best, but I have never satisfied her by answering. There is no girl here that I like especially, but if there is ever going to be, no one will know it except myself. Please keep all I have told you to yourself, and do not even write to M... anything that might make her suspicious.

Serious and responsible beyond his years, Sid assumed a watchful big brother role with Henry. In a letter describing a “tacky party” at Central School, it was clear he considered Henry to be a handful:

I wish you could have been there to see all the different costumes. Ted dressed up as a farmer, I as his wife, Henry as our baby...we had tried to get Lloyd or Beng as the baby, but they both backed out on us. Henry put on a white nightgown and baby hat, and we borrowed the Alexander's buggy and a bottle and nipple for him. He acted all right as a baby, until he got out of the carriage; then he began jumping all over chairs and prancing around cutting capers very differently from any baby I ever saw!

In a postscript to one letter, Sid wrote:

No use writing to Henry anymore, since I can't make him write to you, although I have tried for several months.

The letters Henry did write to me were very descriptive. In one of these, written when he was about ten, he gave many details about life at Central School. Note in the un-edited excerpts below, “Tshisuku” is the Tshiluba word for the tall grass periodically burned off the plains, and “pie-pie” is his spelling of papaya, the orange colored fruit:

I am missing you a lot. Cornelia led in Christian Endeavour this morning. She led quite well except she made a few mistakes. It sure has been hot the last few days. The natives have been burning off the tshisuku so it looks like there is a storm coming.

Yesterday the new CS piano came. It is real pretty. It is black and has brass peddles, and is made of imitation oak. It was dented up a bit though. The church piano is exactly like it. Frank's little monkey, “Stonewall Jackson,” or “Pie-Pie Breeches,” got sunstroke and died. We call Frank's monkey “Pie-Pie Breeches” because he has an orange seat. Frank said he ate too much pie-pie and his seat turned orange like pie-pie. Jojo and Jill and Andrew Jackson are the only monkeys here at CS now.

This letter, illustrated with maps and drawings, went on to describe an adventure at the new swimming hole, which had a “swift current...I almost got caught.”



Central School kids

Henry is third from the left on the front row. Sid is behind him, third from the right.
Anne Boyd Cleveland is on the front row, far right.

By 1932 there were nineteen students and four teachers at Central School. The fifteen boarding students were now in a new brick dormitory, the first unit to be completed in a permanent equipment program, launched with contributions from the home church. Mother expressed her appreciation in a letter to contributors:

You could not appreciate the nice new dormitory as they do, for you have not lived in the dark, poorly ventilated mud houses in which they have been living. Each room holds just two children. A large double window gives plenty of air and light. Cement floors can be kept much cleaner than dirt floors with mats on them. How we mothers enjoyed putting up fresh dainty curtains and making the rooms look like home! It isn't easy to send nine and ten year old children away to boarding schools, but having a good house to leave them in makes it easier, and we thank you all for your generosity in helping make Central School a really permanent institution.



Central School's new buildings

While our parents were generally satisfied with the kind of education, secular and religious, we were getting from their missionary colleagues at other stations, there were times when they regretted the separation that so limited their own communication with us. Letters were inadequate to help children so young deal with ideas and religious practices that might seem in conflict with what they had been taught at home. Both our parents had a strong Christian faith, nurtured by years of Biblical and theological study, but while they were quite forthright in the expression of their beliefs, they were quieter and less emotional about it than some of their missionary colleagues. Some missionaries, especially those with little theological background, were influenced by popular evangelical movements that drew heavily on emotional response. In the mid 1930's, the Oxford Group movement, later called Moral Rearmament, swept the APCM, bringing with it swinging "gospel" hymns and revivalist type meetings with Africans and missionaries. Dad and Mother were alarmed at its effect on Central School, where, in sessions called "house cleaning," students were being urged to make public confessions of their "sins" as a step towards a "new life in Christ." According to report, Henry had already plunged into it enthusiastically, giving vivid descriptions of all the sinful things he had done in the short course of his tender years. Although they rarely travelled except on mission business, without hesitation our parents arranged for someone to drive them to Lubondai so that they could counsel with Henry and Sid. While Sid reacted less impulsively the new movement affected him too, and he had what he later described as his "first unconditional surrender to Christ as my Lord." He also had a strange "revelation" telling him to "go witness to Chief Ntola," the chief of the village near Lubondai. Reflecting recently about this experience, which occurred when he was about fourteen, Sid wrote:

I was thoroughly intimidated by the thought of evangelizing the chief of the large village adjoining the station where we kids were going to school. Quite a friend to the station, he was happy for any of his wives and children to worship with us, attend our schools and even become baptized Christians. As chief however, he considered himself stuck for life with the official priesthood of the native Lulua rites and traditions that held his people together. Efforts by African Christians and missionaries alike had met with firm, polite refusal.

Common sense told me my “witness” would meet with the same fate. Yet, having always been greeted by the gentleman with a smile, I could fantasize his beaming in fatherly fashion at my youthful concern for his soul, and maybe, by the grace of God, his heart softening to the Gospel. Common sense, or rather, to be candid, the horror of what others would say about my presumption, won out. To this day I do not know for certain whether I disobeyed a clear word from heaven. The Lord did not condescend to prolong the argument the way he did with Moses. He left me to suspect, in due course, that the voice had arisen from within a white adolescent’s ego in the first place.

Eventually, some years after Sid gave up the idea of trying to convert him, Chief Ntola did become a Christian.

Our parents were not the only APCM missionaries with reservations about the Oxford Group’s influence, especially the numerous claims of direct messages from God. A missionary nurse, by nature reserved and unaccustomed to public leadership, was asked by one of the Oxford Group enthusiasts to lead a prayer meeting for Lubondai station. “I have been led by God to ask you to do this,” she told the nurse. Facing her missionary colleague, the nurse replied quietly, “I’m sorry, but I cannot do this until God gives me the same message.”

Unlike my brothers, at Bibanga I had little contact with leaders of the Oxford Group Movement, but did share their confusion about the differences among the missionaries in their expressions of Christian faith. In earlier years I had always been uncomfortable when we sometimes met with other children under the leadership of certain missionaries who had us all glibly recite verses from the Bible, offer “sentence prayers,” and make “witness” about our faith, all in a rote form with no discussion. Now, still maturing, but in a mostly adult world, I continued to be uncomfortable with the rather perfunctory emphasis on public “witness.” I also had questions about the nature and relevance of “blessings” which some missionaries claimed to receive from “the Lord,” supposedly in reward for exemplary behavior. One woman thanked God profusely for meeting her need for face powder, not readily available in the Congo, when she miraculously found a half empty box of it, accidentally left behind by a departed guest. Possibly also due to divine providence, said guest was now in some remote corner of the world, too far away to contact.

Wary of the differences among the missionaries, I found no one with whom I felt free enough to express my feelings about this or similar incidents I encountered. Even at home, opportunities to discuss such concerns with my parents were rare,

partly due to the limited amount of time they had with us. There was also some reticence, especially on my father's part, to discuss personal matters. Overhearing their conversations with each other, I knew they were not always in agreement with their missionary colleagues, especially those who tended to be rather rigid in their beliefs, ruled more by law than by the spirit. When they talked to us, however, our parents were generally careful not to speak critically about the other missionaries. Accepting the general understanding that the missionaries needed to be united in their message to the natives, bound our parents and the other Americans in a "family," supposed to be a model to the Congolese. As children belonging to this "family," we were also expected to have exemplary behavior. Through the Presbyterian Catechisms, and the Bible, especially the Ten Commandments, we learned from our parents and other missionary mentors, the basic "do's and don'ts," but many deeper questions were left unanswered.

When I wrote to my parents about my inability to respond honestly to the kind of religious emotionalism and rigidity of beliefs encountered among some of the missionaries, they were sympathetic but urged me to be patient. It was some years before we had any real discussion of such questions as the infallibility of the Bible, considered by some missionaries to be fundamental to the "true" Christian faith.

In view of the fact that such differences in interpretation and practice of Christianity existed not only among the Presbyterians, but also in varying degrees among all the Protestant groups working in the Congo, their ability to work together harmoniously through the Congo Protestant Council was quite remarkable. This cooperation was due in part to the need to stand together against the Catholic oppression, and also grew from a desire to reduce confusion among the Africans about which denomination taught the "true plan of salvation."

Chapter 13

Agnes Scott Prep Graduation

The commencement program of ASP, or Agnes Scott Prep, on November 7, 1933, was a major event at Bibanga. Determined to make our high school graduation as much like the real thing as possible, there was a plan, at one point, to have Winnie and me wear caps and gowns improvised from hospital operating gowns. Mother came to the rescue by offering to make us each a long white dress, which we wore for the program and for the following banquet. We shared the graduation honors, Winnie giving the Salutatory and I the Valedictory, both of us reading stories we had written, and performing on the piano. One of Winnie's piano solos was an original composition entitled "Jungle Wind." The title of my Valedictory Address was, "What Second Generation Missionaries Owe to the American Presbyterian Congo Mission." Dr. George McKee gave the commencement address and awarded our diplomas. A "School Exhibit" of Bible charts and notebooks, and a bon fire, followed the banquet, which was decorated with an aviation theme.

Neither of my parents was there. Dad was on a long postponed trip to South Africa to see an eye doctor, as his eyes had been troubling him ever since the accident at MBS. It was thus impossible for Mother to leave home or the MBS. While it was hard to say goodbye to the Kellersbergers, and other friends I had made at Bibanga, I really looked forward to being back with the family at Mutoto. Winnie and I, both just sixteen, were now ready for college, but we planned to stay at home in the Congo until closer to the beginning of the school year in the States. Winnie was going to Agnes Scott, as planned, but for several reasons, especially cost, I would be attending Lenoir Rhyne, a college in Hickory, for at least the first year. Charles, who had graduated from Hickory High School the previous year, Valedictorian of his class as well, was already attending Lenoir Rhyne.

I got back to Mutoto a few weeks before the Central School Christmas break, and had a little time to settle in before the boys came home. Dad was still not back from South Africa, but I got a warm welcome from Mother and David. Ntumba and Muamba also seemed glad to see me, and Tshiamalenge surpassed all previous productions of salmon croquettes in my honor! It was nice to see the station "family" again, which had changed a little over the years. The Edmistons, Millers, Plumer Smiths, Watts and Worths were all still there, but the Rochesters were on furlough. L.A. McMurray was now joined by his new wife Jean, a beautiful brunette, whom he had married while on furlough. The most recent arrivals were a new doctor and nurse, Tinsley Smith, replacing Dr. King, who had left the mission temporarily, and Catherine Minter, replacing Nina Farmer. There was an obviously budding romance between the new arrivals, and we were all waiting for them to

publicly declare their “intentions.” Except for our brother in Hickory, our family circle was completed when Dad got back from South Africa and Sid and Henry returned from Central School. Dad brought us an apple from South Africa, a rare treat, which Mother cut up into equal pieces for us to share. This was the only “happy” part of his report on the visit to a country, which was in the throes of apartheid. “They are sitting on a thunder keg down there,” Dad told us, as he described meeting well educated, cultured, black South Africans, who were restricted by the color of their skin from libraries, public facilities and even churches, which he, a foreigner, could enter at will. Although the whole family had much to learn about truly equal relations between blacks and whites, the close association with black people on the APCM, who were their peers intellectually, increased their awareness of the racism existing in the Congo, the United States, and South Africa. In a conversation with one of her black missionary colleagues, a woman from Alabama, Mother spoke regretfully of the laws that would prevent them from meeting as friends in their homeland. “You and I are friends out here,” she said, “but when and if we meet in America, there is a line drawn between us that we cannot remove, even though neither of us had anything to do with putting it there.”

Always seeking further light on the subject, Dad found particularly interesting the works of Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish economist/sociologist who wrote An American Dilemma, and he sometimes shared them with us. We heard from both parents about a level of racism among some of the APCM missionaries, shown in their lack of interest in higher education for the Congolese. Like the Belgians, a few of them believed it was enough to educate the Africans to a point where they could function at low level positions in the mission and government. In spite of the efforts of the MBS and other schools to continually advance the curriculum levels, no schools in the Congo, at that time, offered the full equivalent of an American high school education, and it would take another 20 years before the first university was established.

Occasionally, when there was talk of some of the brighter students going out of the country to advance their education, some of the missionaries objected on the grounds that it would give them “bad ideas.” There were now a number of men, and some women, who were educated enough to assume responsible positions in the mission programs, but the missionaries still exercised major control, setting the rules and disciplining Africans who disobeyed them. Breaking any of the Ten Commandments, the Seventh concerning adultery being the one most commonly violated, could be cause for “killing” a name on the church roles. There were also other missionary-bred edicts, which related more to their own ideas of discipline and correct behavior. Being late to class, neglecting assigned chores, or going somewhere without permission could bring on a whipping with the “lukodi” switch. In spite of the greater attention to educating women, the primary purpose, according to some, was to train them to be good wives. In a letter to American church supporters, one missionary at Mutoto wrote of the Girl’s Home:

This is the factory where we turn out preachers' wives...I am the whipping boss. This morning a whole drove of them did not fall out in time to get to morning prayers, so they were marched up to see me. Edgar Guest has a little poem about "It takes a lot of lovin' in a house, to make it a home." So it takes a lot of lickin' in a Girl's Home out here, to make it go. But just the same, they are just about as fine a bunch of girls as you will find, and work with them is foundation work that will be counting down the years.

With such attitudes, not uncommon among the missionaries at that time, it was no wonder that it was difficult for me to get very close to many of the girls my own age at the Girl's Home. Whether I wanted it or not, I was their teacher, simply because I was white.

My last Christmas at Mutoto was memorable, especially the time with the family, and the beautiful singing of the choirs, trained by L.A. McMurray. A favorite of mine was "Oh Holy Night", sung both in French and in a Tshiluba translation made by our father. Also sung frequently at the Christmas celebrations, were Dad's translation of "Angels We Have Heard on High," and my own Tshiluba version of "The First Noel," translated when I was thirteen. These and other translations made by members of our family, including Mother and Henry, got into the APCM hymnbook, still used by Tshiluba speaking churches in the Congo today.

After Sid and Henry returned to Central School I was busy reading for college entrance exams and other preparations for going to the States. I also helped with some of the station work, particularly music. I had already done some teaching of simple songs to women and children at Mutoto and Bibanga. Mrs. Worth, whose many duties at Mutoto included the musical training of the women at MBS, asked me to help her prepare the senior wives to sing at their graduation in late March. I was also assigned some Sunday school teaching which involved music. Although I doubt that the Africans gained much from my amateur efforts, it was a valuable experience for me, providing the closer contact with the Congolese that I had missed during the Central School and Bibanga years. The best part was the association with some young people, initially considered my "helpers," who really became partners as well as friends. These included Kavulu, and a couple of girls from the Girl's Home, Lusambo and Luheta. Kavulu was now quite proficient at playing hymns on the folding organ. He often came up to our house just to listen to the Victrola, especially after the McMurrays lent us their player and records when they went on furlough. I saw less of Lusambo and Luheta, because of the restrictions of their schedules at the Girl's Home. When we did work together, the girls showed great initiative and creative ideas, many of them related to their own culture. More and more, as all of us got together to plan programs or just for pleasure, Kavulu and the girls introduced some Kasai songs and instruments, eventually developing a little "orchestra."

The stigma of paganism associated with native music, had been reduced considerably by the appearance of Kalala, a wonderful performer on the "madimba,"

a lovely sounding instrument resembling a xylophone. The madimba was played by tapping rubber-tipped sticks on graduated wooden keys laid over hollow, dried calabash gourds. With the instrument strapped over his neck, Kalala performed in the manner of a griot, moving around as he told stories through song and dance. A large crowd always gathered whenever he appeared, for he was vastly entertaining, especially in his deliberately funny songs and chatter, imitating white people, especially missionaries. Like everyone else the missionaries enjoyed his performances, but as far as I know, none of them gave Kalala any money for his playing. Many years later I learned that some of the APCM Congolese at Mutoto actually paid him out of their own pockets to perform for the missionaries. Entertainment nights at the Girl's and Boy's Homes, also gave us a chance to experience the richness of Kasai culture. On these occasions, the young people let go of their missionary-bred inhibitions and plunged into lively theatrical performances, with songs, stories and games that were reminiscent of traditional village life. The performances, held outdoors, and often in the moonlight, always attracted a large crowd of missionaries, students and others around the station. With a minimum of improvised stage props and costumes, palm branches for trees and houses, a leopard represented by a crawling human figure with corn shucks tied on his rear end, live goats and chickens running around, the actors relied largely on their ingenious pantomiming ability to get their story and messages across. Subject matter ranged from traditional tales and music, to current events, and the ever-popular theme, imitating Ku Mputu people. Dad was a popular choice for the latter, since he had certain mannerisms that were easy to imitate. A takeoff on "Mulunda Dibue", holding his head slightly to one side, and loudly calling out some unpronounceable Biblical name like "Nebukadenesa," could bring a roar from the audience, including "Mulunda Dibue" himself.

With the realization that I had little time left in the land of my birth, I once again took out my diary. "Just must get some Congo into it," I wrote, as I began to describe experiences that might be denied me in the States:

Had fun climbing guava tree and running around in the wind. Don't think I'll ever get too grown up to do this. What are trees for, anyway?

Other entries were about bicycle rides with Dad, playing tennis, eating native chop, piano lessons with Mrs. Worth, a children's recital where David got the prize for "Greatest Improvement," a farewell party for the McMurrays, meetings with Kavulu and the girls, a visit from Winnie and her father, a visit from a "State Man" (Belgian official), an airplane landing at Kananga "4 days out of Paris," and our family sitting out in the moonlight, singing together. I also wrote about our temperamental cook, Tshiamalenge:

Peta, the hospital boy, got dead drunk last night. They're selling some new strong stuff out of corn. Tshiamalenge had had some too, and was sort of "happy" last night.

In March I made the first of a number of entries about Ntumba, our favorite among the servants. "Our Ntumba is very sick--black water fever, maybe." Some months later he was diagnosed as having a combination of diabetes and cerebral malaria. During that time, he was in and out of the hospital, and we went to see him frequently, encouraged when he occasionally seemed better. Once, when we went to his home in Kankalenge, we found him receiving a treatment, traditional among the Congolese, for reviving very sick people. Outside the little house he shared with his young wife, Meta, Ntumba was lying on a mat-covered frame stretched over a large pit in which a fire was burning. Gathered around our unrecognizably still and listless friend were his wife and friends, quietly watching and waiting for the fire's warmth to bring restoration. Ntumba nodded feebly towards us, but it was not the warm and witty man we loved.

There were other crises. As with all the APCM doctors, Dr. Smith had his share of emergency cases among the Belgians. A pregnant woman was brought into the station with a severe case of dysentery. She stayed several months until her baby was born, and required round the clock care as she passed through several critical periods. Both Mother and Mrs. Worth had to cancel their regular schedules sometimes, in order to provide Dr. Smith and Miss Minter some relief from their watch over her.

One of the severe thunder and lightning storms that had frightened me so much as a child, struck the Mutoto area during this period. An older building at the Bible School burned down completely, and some houses in the village of Kankalenge were also struck. Fortunately there were no human casualties at Mutoto, but we soon found out what happened at Kankalenge. A large mob of people from Kankalenge came running up the hill into our station, shouting and chasing a badly burned old woman. "She made the lightning!" they cried. "See, her medicine has turned on her!" With great effort, the missionaries, assisted by Congolese at the station, rescued the frightened woman from the pursuing crowd, and got her to the hospital for treatment of her burns. They were unable to convince all the people that lightning was not made by human "medicine," but they did stop them from killing the accused.

The end of March, and early April, were occupied with preparations for Easter, and commencement events for the Middle School and MBS. Regarding the Middle School, I noted in my diary:

Parade and what-not! Diplomas worn on hats, and around neck...all specs, shoes, etc. borrowable.... Locusts are back...almost broke up commencement.

Concerning the MBS commencement, I wrote that "the senior wives went flat on their hymn," but otherwise all went well, with Pastor Kabongo delivering the main address. This, too, was followed by a parade, with women "powdered and dressed fit to kill, accompanied by a native orchestra." Kalala, the madimba player, was there.

Several weeks after the commencements, my parents, David and I left on a nine-day trip to hold conferences in two villages in the area of the railway line. As usual, the local mission-trained pastors moved out of their houses to accommodate us. We waded through a sea of welcoming hands, and were showered with gifts of corn, peanuts and other produce. At Muamba Kuvulu, the first village, the chief's "Muadi," or "First Wife," gave us an especially warm welcome, "most hugged us," according to my diary. When we later visited the chief and his harem of 30 wives, we found one of his wives tied up by his bed in a pitch-dark room, obviously for some misdemeanor. Also in the room were thousands of copper crosses, which were used in the Congo at that time for trading. The chief said he couldn't count them.

While my parents held services and conducted conferences with the adults, I worked with the children, assisted by Kavulu, Lusambo and Luheta. We taught them songs and games, some Ku Mputu ones like "Going to Jerusalem," and others of African origin. A local pastor showed some native tricks, and a student from the Mutoto Boy's Home provided a whole show one evening, featuring some dramatic skills based on traditional stories and impersonations. Kavulu, Lusambo and I sang a hymn together, for one of the communion services. I especially enjoyed getting to know Lusambo and Luheta better on this trip. Lusambo wrote in my autograph book. One day, at the second village, Demba, we went to a little lake together, where I taught the girls a little bit about swimming and floating. Because of the danger of crocodiles, Africans in this area did very little swimming. In Demba, directly on the railroad, we saw trains and autos passing through frequently, and we encountered other visitors, as I wrote in my diary:

Two state men (traders) almost broke up my children's meeting...came to see the chief. A man from Cape Town is here...can't get back. Catholics came this morning...came to tell us "muoyo"...they were in a parade, singing "Ave Maria."

At the end of the conference, Mr. Miller came with a car to pick us up and take us to Lake Munkamba for a vacation. On the way, we stopped again at Muamba Kuvulu and had lunch with the pastor. While we were there, Mr. Miller put in some lightning rods at the chief's house.

Our three weeks at Lake Munkamba were wonderful. We were a complete family when Sid and Henry joined us, and the time with our parents was more relaxed than it had ever been. Even though neither of them was completely on vacation, as the Bible Revision Committee met at the lake while we were there, they joined us in swimming, sailing and other recreational activities. Mother's "swimming" was a frantic doggy paddle which she kept trying to improve, in spite of our kidding. We also enjoyed the company of the Worths, Edmistons, Miss Minter and occasionally vacationers from other missions. Dr. Smith came from Mutoto for a brief stay, spending most of the time with Miss Minter in such secluded spots as they could find. Our impression that things were getting serious between them was confirmed when, shortly after Dr. Smith left, Miss Minter also decided to return to Mutoto.

Central School commencement, marking Sid's graduation, occurred while we were at the lake. Again, neither of our parents could attend the graduation, but I was there to represent the family. It was fun being at Central School again, seeing all the changes, and staying in the new girl's dormitory. There were three students, Sid, Jane Cleveland and Jimmy Hartzler, in the graduating class. Sid was valedictorian. The night before commencement the three graduates had leading roles in a play, "The Courtship of Miles Standish," in which Sid was Miles Standish, Jane was Priscilla, and Jimmy was John Alden. According to my diary, Jimmy, alias John Alden, "just thundered at Sid." The car bringing Sid, Henry and me back to the lake was packed with ten passengers. Those bound for Mutoto had a swim before they went on. Soon afterward another car arrived, carrying the travelling dentist for the mission, Hugh Wilds, and his family. As always, Mr. Wilds set up his dentist chair and foot-pedaled drilling apparatus, and was ready for business. His dentistry training, while limited, was the best available on the mission, or probably anywhere in the Congo. A delightfully cheerful man, with deep blue eyes, and craggy features, Mr. Wilds was known affectionately as "Grandpa." While his foot pumped the drill, and his hands plied our mouths with the dreaded instruments, he often sang funny songs, considerable easing our pain and fear.

With Sid and Henry back, and other families coming and going, the lake became even more lively. During the day we swam, rowed, or went on sailing excursions and picnics to "William's Island," named for Bill Worth, where a house had been built. On moonlit nights we went out again on the lake or sat by the shore. Indoors, we played games and listened to overseas broadcasts on a short-wave radio. On Sundays, with no swimming allowed, we attended church services at the nearby workmen's village or at the village across the lake. One Sunday, when the rest of the family went to the workmen's village, Sid went to the other village, sailing alone across the lake in the "Minx." On his return voyage the lack of wind made him quite late for dinner.

Lake Fua, another lake not far from Lake Munkamba, was a popular place for the vacationers, especially for fishing. It was visited mostly by male sports enthusiasts, so I never got to see it, but I often heard glowing reports of its wonders. Surrounded by vines and trees in a forest glade, Lake Fua's incredibly deep water held a great variety of fish and other wildlife. Hippos often interfered with the fishing traps. Sid and some of the men went to lake Fua one day and brought back two tiger fish and a guinea hen. Another time, Dad took the boys on a hunting trip near Lake Munkamba and Sid brought down his first antelope.

While the family was still at the lake, Dad and I made a trip to Lusambo, to see the Belgian government agency about stamping my passport, and other papers needed for my journey to the States. The passport had been obtained through the U.S. Consulate in Johannesburg, South Africa. Mr. Miller came over from Mutoto and drove us to Lusambo. In the twelve years since we had lived there briefly (when Henry was born), Lusambo had changed considerably, with the mission now run by Methodists and occupied also by a government and business section. My diary

noted that “downtown” was “like Ku Mputu,” and that while we were shopping we “saw some Mohammedans, one on a bicycle.” The “Mohammedans” were probably Muslim or Hindu traders. After the passport business was completed, we went back to the mission station where we spent the night. The missionaries occupying our old house invited us to breakfast on their porch looking out over the Sankuru River. I wrote in my diary that on our way back to Munkamba the ferry crossing the Sankuru River “was rowed by 23 men, lots of them prisoners.”

For a few days at the end of our stay at the lake, our family had the place all to ourselves and we enjoyed it thoroughly. My wars with Sid were virtually over. Not only had he stopped laughing at the “sissy” way I handled the rowboat, but he began teaching me to sail the “Minx.” On our last evening at Munkamba, the whole family had a picnic and swim at William’s Island. Sailing back in a glorious sunset, like so many others in Congo, we sang “Day is Dying in the West.”

Back at Mutoto Mother and I spent time getting together the clothes and other things I would need for my upcoming trip to the U.S. Through the years our clothing needs had been taken care of through purchases during furloughs, Mother’s sewing, or Congolese tailors. Very rarely we received packages of clothing from Hickory, brought out by missionaries returning from furlough. Now, as a teenager, I could fit into some hand-me-downs from the younger missionary women and this made me feel very grown up. Wearing a cast-off from Jean McMurray I fantasized, in vain, that perhaps a little of her statuesque beauty and poise would rub off on me. For the trip to the States Mother felt I needed to be a little more “dressed-up” and also have some warmer clothes for the cooler climate in the U.S. She asked the Dixons to purchase a few things and send them out to us by one of the returning missionaries. In the meanwhile, with a little help from me, she put together several outfits from old scraps we had in trunks or donations from Jean McMurray and others. I thought they were “awfully cute.” Even more exciting was the arrival of the package from Hickory, containing a store-bought dress and coat.

During the last weeks before my departure practically all activity on the station was focused on the preparations for a conference, to take place at Mutoto the first week of June. The world-renowned Christian leader, John R. Mott, considered a founder of the modern ecumenical movement, would be presiding. In addition to the APCM missionaries, delegations from other Congo missions as well as some of the Congo Protestant Council leaders would be attending. Every niche of vacant space, including homes of missionaries on furlough, was used to house the visitors and provide meeting and dining space for all. “Rushing around all morning,” I wrote in my diary the day before the first arrivals, “hanging curtains at the Rochester’s home where we are going to eat.”

APCM cars came in first since there was a mission meeting scheduled the weekend before the Mott conference was to begin. Some of the other mission groups arrived in time for the Sunday morning services with Africans, and they also participated in an outside vesper service of the missionaries. I was thrilled to hear one of the

visitors play Bach's "Ave Maria" on his violin. Finally, Dr. Mott arrived, accompanied by a group from the Kinshasa-based Congo Protestant Council. In his opening address, Dr. Mott, a large man with bushy white eyebrows, provided a broader perspective for the Congo gathering as he described conditions and Christian programs in other parts of the world where he had visited. He also showed great interest in learning more about the Congo, so the meeting developed into an exchange of information and ideas that our parents and others found extremely helpful. A missionary from one of the independent "gospel" groups in the lower Congo, kept loudly interjecting "Amen," and "Hear, hear!" into the proceedings, "most too often," as I noted in my diary. There was good response from the Congolese leaders who attended the conference, as well as from the students Dr. Mott addressed in a special meeting at the MBS. Sid and Plumer Smith translated for the Africans. While all of us got caught up in the excitement of the event, twelve year-old Henry, as always, was in the center of it all. On the last day, as everyone was lining up to bid farewell to the noted leader, Henry also stepped up to shake hands, man to man, saying, "I'll see you in New York in two years, Dr. Mott." Much amused by this, Dad asked Henry afterwards, "Do you think Dr. Mott will be there to carry your suitcase when we get to New York?"

Several other events took place at the time of the conference. A happy one was the announcement for which we had all been waiting, the engagement of Tinsley Smith and Catherine Minter. A much sadder one, not unexpected, was the death of Ntumba. Beginning just before the conference, as his condition worsened, I made daily entries in my diary:

Ntumba much worse...has gone to the hospital...Went to see Ntumba, still conscious, but can't possible live. I shook hands with him, probably for the last time...

Ntumba died. Meta had his head in her lap. He certainly was a fine man, and we loved him...

Dr. Smith took us over in the car to Ntumba's funeral. Lots of women having madilu there, but they kept quiet during the service. I could hardly stand it. Feel so sorry for little Meta.

Missionaries generally discouraged the unrestrained venting of emotions, customary at Congolese "madilu" (mourning), so the women kept relatively quiet while our father was conducting the burial service. However, Ntumba's widow could not hide her grief. With her body stripped to the waist, Meta followed the wooden casket, weeping disconsolately, and calling out her pet name for her husband, "Tshimankinda wanyi" (my Tshimankinda). Dad himself, had trouble controlling his emotions. This was the closest I had ever been to a death of someone I really knew and loved. Ntumba taught my brothers and me a great deal, and provided us with a true example of a "fine" human being. We had our own special name for him, "Muinantumba," or "Brother Ntumba."

"So nice to have just our family once more," I wrote after all the conference visitors had left. There were just three days left until my departure, and I filled them with "last things:" a "native chop" feast prepared by Tshiamalenge, an evening of music with Kavulu and other friends, my last Sunday of playing for the missionary vesper service. Packing my trunk, I put in some Congo mementos, including ivory and woodcarvings, copper objects, cowry shells, palm fiber cloths, a "tshisanji" (musical instrument), a monkey skin, and a small bag of earth. The total value in U.S. Dollars was \$15.00.

By the time I was ready to go, I had a large portfolio of papers, assembled by Dad, in consultation with the mission business representative. In addition to my passport and customs declaration, there were my birth certificate, a medical certification letter from Dr. Smith, general letters in French and English, explaining my parents' absence, and designating my missionary guardians on the trip, the Cleveland and Millers. Remembering problems with the U.S. immigration authorities when Charles had been sent to the States without his parents, Dad gave me two letters to use in case of trouble. These were both addressed to family friends from Georgia, then serving in the U.S. Congress: Senator Richard Russell, and Representative Robert Ramspeck. I also carried all the tickets I would need for the journey, which would follow a different route from our previous trips through Kinshasa and Matadi. Along with the Miller and Plumer Smith families from Mutoto, I would board the train at Luluabourg (now called more and more by its original Tshiluba name, Kananga) for Lobito Bay in Angola, sailing from there on a boat of the Hamburg-America Line.

On June 11, after we had our last family meal together at noon, we began loading the car for the trip to Kananga. Mother and Dad accompanied me to the train, but because of limited space in the car we had to leave the boys at Mutoto. Parting with my brothers was "awfully hard," as I noted in my diary: "Henry welled up," and "David said he was going to hide me." Among several loving letters I later received from my brothers, one from Henry, addressing me as "Weese," my family nickname, also referred to the African friends bidding me goodbye:

How we miss you. Ever since that car pulled out for Kananga with precious 'Weese' in it, this home just is a dreary place...Kavulu is still coming up here to 'kubula nsolo' (a Tshiluba expression equivalent to "shoot the breeze") with Sid and I. The day you left he didn't talk a bit. He shed tears as the car rolled out. He said afterwards he was heartsick ("mutshima wanyi udi usama bikole"). I think Mother sent you his letter.

The separation from my parents was an even more traumatic experience for me. After we reached Kananga, we ate a packed supper by the car, and waited for the train to arrive. Not surprisingly it was many hours late, so our final goodbyes were said in darkness, all of us in tears. The missionaries accompanying me on the train, especially Mrs. Miller, did their best to comfort me but the reality of the parting was overwhelming. It was hard enough to know that I would not see my family for another two years, but there was also the possibility that I would never again see the country and people I loved. I cried all night.

Eventually I was distracted from my sadness by the novelty of the train travel, and stops along the five-day trip to Lobito. Early on the first morning, the Cleveland family from Lubondai came aboard. I was especially glad to see Jane, who joined me on the top shelves of the six-bunk compartment assigned to some of the younger members of our APCM party. Some other Central School students, from another mission, joined us for part of the way, before we were switched to the boat train. At some of the stops we had time to get off and walk around, one time climbing up an anthill. On the third day I said goodbye to the Congo, as we reached the border with Angola at Dilolo. As described in my diary, there was a great change in the scenery at this point:

In desert most of the day...that's what they call it, at least. Miles and miles of hot sands, dusty, tree-less plains. Got to Chinguara in the afternoon. Pretty little place. Got some strawberries there. Nyummy! Got to Nova Lisboa after bedtime, but got up....Most beautiful scenery, climbed through the rockiest mountains...part of the Crystal Range. Crossed some of the scariest bridges, way up above deep gorges, dried river beds, just a few inches between edge of train and edge of bridge....Got to Lobito, ate dinner at Terminus.

The Terminus was a newly built hotel owned by the International Railroad Line, in association with Cooks Travel Agency. It was on the ocean, close to the railroad station and only a short distance from the ship docks. Its brochure, in French, English and Portuguese, advertised a number of amenities which were quite impressive to those of us from the Congo: Electricity, rooms with private baths, hot and cold running water, and an "orchestra" in the dining room. Needless to say, we could not afford to stay there. Some of our group went to a mission house, but most of us stayed at an older Portuguese hotel called Fragoso & Fragoso.

We were in Lobito for almost a week, waiting for our ship, the S.S. Njassa, to arrive from its journey around the eastern and southern coasts of Africa. During that time we were entertained by the local missionaries, went swimming at their beach and watched the coming and going of ocean liners. We explored the streets of Lobito, a pretty, Hispanic looking town which was dominated by Portuguese colonial officials, traders and settlers, and with Africans in generally servile positions. The most memorable experience there was a trip to nearby Benguela, a port town built by the Portuguese in 1617, from which slaves were shipped to the New World. At an old church, where they used to baptize the slaves before loading them on the boats, we were shown a stone, worn hollow by the thousands of captives forced to kneel there. To prevent the slaves from escaping, the entire top of the wall surrounding the church was covered by shards of glass embedded into the surface.

The S.S. Njassa arrived at about midnight on June 22, and we boarded the next morning. One of the first changes I noted from other trips was the large number of English speaking people on the ship. Like us, a large number of passengers were headed to Southampton, England. They had boarded the ship at one of the five South

African stops, as well as Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika (modern day Tanzania), or Beira, Mozambique. A few were headed to Antwerp, and had Belgian sounding names. A large number of Germans, headed to Hamburg, which was the last stop, also came from South Africa. We picked up other passengers after Lobito.

The Njassa was about the same size and as comfortable as other Belgian boats I had travelled on in earlier trips. Jane Cleveland and I shared a cabin in Second Class, close to other members of our APCM party. On the third day of our voyage, after a long stop at Luanda (capital of Angola), the water around our ship turned brown, indicating we were close to the mouth of the Congo River.

“Near the Congo,” I wrote in my diary. “Wish I could go up it!” We did not stop at Matadi, but went on to Port Noir, in French Congo, anchoring there briefly. Out of sight of land for the next week, we happily plunged into a variety of activities on the boat, swimming, playing deck tennis, shuffleboard and other games. We walked around the decks together, watching the passengers, and feeding the animals in one section of the ship, which were probably headed to zoos in Europe and the U.S. We shared some of these activities with other English-speaking young people we met on the Njassa. At other times, especially on the three Sundays at sea, the APCM group got together for family prayers and a worship service led by one of the missionaries. Sometimes Jane, her younger sister Anne Boyd and I spoke to each other in Tshiluba.

The ship’s staff kept us well fed and entertained, staging several major events. I spent a good bit of time putting together costumes for the smaller children to wear to a children’s party, as well as for me to wear to an adults’ fancy dress ball. While all of us dressed up and attended the adult party, we only watched the dancing. The kind of “cheek to cheek” dancing of that era had somehow become a “no-no” for right-thinking Presbyterians, at least among the missionaries. Later, I heard further arguments against it in Hickory. Although it was a different kind of dancing from the “pagan” dancing of the natives in Congo, there seemed to be some connection in the minds of the censors. Without trying to understand it myself, I simply accepted the word from my parents and others that missionaries’ children did not dance. Thus, in the many notes in my diary about the beautiful music of the orchestra, any mention of dancing was accompanied by the word “disgusting.” Another reference to music concerned a South African passenger we met, who made musical sounds on a saw:

After supper we went down to hear Mr. Woodward play on the saw. His brother went down with the Titanic orchestra, playing “Nearer My God To Thee.”

Our next port stop, at Freetown, Sierra Leone, provided us entertainment of a different sort. As happened so often, Africans rowed out to the ship in canoes to dive for money thrown into the water by passengers. This group, from a town whose origins were associated with free black Americans, as well as Africans freed from British slave ships, had an act all their own, singing, in English, songs like

“Sonny Boy,” popular in America at that time, “Glory Hallelujah,” and others. One man, wearing a stovepipe hat, collar, tie and a loincloth, gave us a “preaching” from his canoe, holding out a box for the “collection.” Unfortunately, in his eagerness to catch the coins tossed by the passengers, he tipped his canoe over and was soon splashing around, trying to retrieve his moneybox. The top hat floated off.

Two days after we left Freetown, as we saw the Cape Verde islands in the distance, a chimpanzee from the “zoo” climbed to the top of the mast to say “goodbye” to Africa. There was much excitement but he was finally recaptured. As the weather became so cold that I was freezing in my new coat, I knew we were getting closer to Europe. One more stop, at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands, marked our last view of Africa. We reached the English Channel on July 12, and finally docked at Southampton the next morning. After going through all the “paraphernalia,” as I described the procedures with passports and papers, we got off the ship and spent some time on the docks before transferring to the next ship, the S.S. New York. To get to the ship, another of the Hamburg-America Line, we rode in a small tugboat out to the Isle of Wight. As we came up to the New York and boarded, a band lustily played “God Save the King,” to a tune I most associated with “My Country Tis of Thee.”

The six-day trip to New York was pleasant. Once again I shared a cabin with Jane Cleveland. Our only stop was at Queenstown, Ireland. There were a number of Americans on board, including some Northern Presbyterian missionaries to China, with a daughter my age, named Louise. To celebrate the various birthdays and anniversaries in our party that occurred during our trip the APCM group had a special party one night in the dining room, at a long table with a fancily decorated cake. On my 17th birthday, July 19, the day before we sailed into New York harbor, I got up early and opened family birthday letters and presents brought with me from Mutoto. Mother’s letter held her college class pin (“wise old owl”), and a pretty handkerchief. “Birthday letter from Henry too,” I noted in my diary. In the dining room that night, the waiter gave me an extra share of ice cream in honor of the occasion.

It was warm when we arrived in New York, but a last minute catastrophe forced me to wear my coat. I had dressed up in one of my “cute” home-made outfits, but just as we were moving off the ship the old fabric from which it was made erupted in a large split across the back of the skirt. There was nothing to do at that point but cover it up with my coat. According to my diary, a reporter at the dock interviewed me, but since I have no memory of this I don’t know if there were any questions about adjustments to the new climate. Whatever the case, I was too shy to explain my dilemma, and might have pretended that New York weather in July was actually cooler than in the Congo.

Uncle Eckard, one of Dad’s brothers and a favorite of mine, met me at the docks. He was then working at the FHA in New York City. Aunt Clare, his lovely wife, was with him. We had always enjoyed Uncle Eckard, especially because he always joked with

us so much, sometimes deliberately trying to shock our father or his gentle, well-mannered wife.

This time, with detailed instructions from Dad about my travel arrangements and papers, he seemed much more serious. After we said goodbye to the Clevelands and others in the APCM group, Uncle Eckard and Aunt Clare took me to lunch at an Italian Restaurant. Soon after that they took me to Pennsylvania Station where I was to board my train for Hickory. Relieved to have finished with all my travel documents, I was startled when Uncle Eckard asked me, quite seriously, "Do you have your pass for the Mason Dixon Line?" He let me panic for a minute before he explained that it was a joke. "Left on the train at 3:30," I wrote in my diary. "Feel sort of lost...First views of America once more."

My train was scheduled to arrive in Hickory at 6:15 the next morning. I was so afraid of not waking up that I hardly slept a wink. At each stop I looked out and watched the lights of the town and people getting on and off the train. When we finally arrived in Hickory, Rosa Lee and Charles were there to meet me, driven by their neighbor, Miss Garn. Charles was now a tall young man, almost as tall as our father, but still looked more like our mother. Of course the two ladies had much to say about how much I had grown! After all the hugs, we loaded my baggage into Miss Garn's car, and headed for the Dixon home where Polly and Nannie were waiting. After all the greetings and hugs, I was shown to the room that would be mine for the next few years, on the ground floor next to Polly. I was barely settled, however, before Nannie came in to say that since the next day was Sunday, we must go "up street" and buy me a hat to wear to church.

Chapter 14

Hickory

The service at the Hickory Presbyterian Church the next morning was quite a contrast to what I was accustomed to in the Congo. "First white congregational singing, pipe organ, etc.," I wrote in my diary. Unlike at Mutoto, the singing here was rather lethargic, led by a small choir of mostly older women and men with wobbly voices, all dressed in their Sunday best. The ladies all wore large flower-decorated hats. The woman playing the organ, also wearing a hat, was limited in skill and in repertoire, largely sticking to slow pieces. The minister, admired by my Aunts for his "comforting sermons," did little to liven the atmosphere, so that I had great difficulty in staying awake. After church everyone came to life, as if released from lethargy by the touch of a wand. I noted in my diary that I met "lots of people," and recorded some of their comments: "My how you have grown"..."You haven't changed a bit"..."How did you leave your folks?"



Louise, circa 1934

The rest of the day followed a pattern that remained unchanged, Sunday after Sunday. First there was Sunday dinner, a tasty southern-style feast prepared by Polly, with some help from Rosa Lee, followed by an hour or so of quiet rest before the doorbell started ringing, announcing the arrival of callers. The aunts rushed to greet them, some of them neighbors who walked over from their homes, some arriving in their cars, occupying and emptying the chairs on the front porch of the Dixon home in seemingly orchestrated intervals. This went on for several hours. On that first Sunday I was the center of attention, but even on subsequent Sundays I was expected to come out and sit with the visitors, who rarely included anyone close to my age. Charles came out occasionally, but much of the time managed to disappear, turning up again just in time for supper. After supper we returned again to church for the young people's meeting and the evening service.

The Monday after I arrived, July 23, was Charles' birthday, and remembering my recent birthday, the Aunts had gifts for both of us waiting at the breakfast table. One of my gifts, as I noted in my diary, was a "pretty green rain cape." As I was to learn, rainwear of all kinds was considered extremely important equipment in the Dixon household, especially by Nannie. A joint birthday cake, with all the trimmings, followed later in the day.

It was several days before I had a chance to unpack the trunk, which held most of my things from the Congo. The trunk had been placed in the basement as soon as I arrived. Nannie insisted on helping me unpack the trunk. Her barely disguised fears that the trunk was full of strange diseases from Africa erupted when the first thing I pulled out was the monkey skin. In no uncertain terms she told me that the monkey skin and most of the other treasures, including the bag of Congo soil, would not be allowed upstairs. It was impossible to explain to her how much these things, especially the soil from the land of my birth, meant to me. This was the beginning of a relationship that was quite often stifling, considerably inhibiting my adjustment to life in America.

Polly, the eldest of the sisters, ruled the kitchen and was very forthright in her opinions. She rarely ventured from the house, even to go to church, largely because of her crippling rheumatism, arthritis and high blood pressure. Both Nannie and Rosa Lee kept a watchful eye out for "sister's" health needs, and Rosa Lee especially tried to relieve her from her kitchen duties as much as Polly would allow her to do so. Aside from her teaching schedule at the high school across the street, and going to church, Rosa Lee spent much time at home helping wherever she could. While she was the principle bread-earner of the family, she had little say about how the household was run. Nannie was clearly the "boss" of the house, taking care of all the business affairs, doing most of the shopping, and taking charge of both Charles and me. Right away I realized that Charles' position in the household was quite different from mine. He was the Dixon's child, and, especially, Nannie's child. They raised and nurtured him for most of his life. I was the interloper, an added responsibility thrust upon them by my parents in Africa. They were kind and loving to me, especially Rosa Lee, but they were too set in their ways to easily accommodate another female

in the house, especially one from such a different background. Charles, being male, was not expected to help with the household chores, but when I tried to help with such things as dish washing, ironing or cleaning, my efforts were criticized because I didn't do it the "right way." More than once Nannie suggested that my parents had not properly raised me.

The most serious problem, however, was an intense concern for my behavior as a missionaries' daughter, which severely limited my contacts with young people my own age. I was pleased when some of the Hickory girls invited me to their bridge parties. I had no particular interest in card games, and my experience was limited to "Rook" and "Authors," but it seemed a good way to make some new friends. Nannie, however, told me I would have to turn down the invitations. Bridge parties, she said, were associated with gambling, and even if I went to the parties and didn't play, my name, or the family's name, was likely to get into the Hickory Daily Record, the chronicler of every social occasion taking place in what was then heralded as "the best balanced town in the United States." Dances, as I already knew, were also out for me, even though Charles had begun arguing with Nannie about this prohibition, which greatly limited his own social life. One Sunday I got into major trouble with Nannie for breaking the rules for Sunday. Bored with sitting on the porch with the afternoon visitors, I had accepted an afternoon car ride with a young man I had met, the son of a Lutheran minister. It had been a pleasant interlude, but I arrived back home to a stern faced Nannie. "Joy riding on the Sabbath!" she exclaimed, and launched into a long lecture about the sinfulness of my innocent ride. I cried for several hours.



Rosa Lee and Frances (Fannie, or Nannie)
Polly seated

I often had the feeling that neither of the other sisters was as worried about my behavior, or that of Charles, as was Nannie. Rosa Lee in particular showed sympathy when she could, even though she herself was dominated by Nannie. There was general acceptance of Nannie as the rule maker in the house. She was intelligent, good hearted and often showed a sense of humor, but she was also nervous and rigid in her expectations of other people. I felt far more sympathy for Nannie when I learned from Charles that she had once been very much in love with a young man, but could not marry him because of her parents' objections to his being a Catholic. As far as I know, except for my mother, none of the other sisters had any serious romantic relationships, and she and Rosa Lee were the only ones to attend college.



Frances and Rosa Lee Dixon

The Sunday visitors to the Dixon home reflected the long and varied ties the sisters had with Hickory, some through Grandfather Dixon's association with the furniture industry, others through the church and quite a few Rosa Lee's colleagues and former students at the high school. Conversations focused largely on family and local matters, mostly unfamiliar to me. Hearing the Aunts talk amongst themselves following these visits, I picked up some idea of their own values and prejudices. "Common" or "ordinary" was a term frequently used in connection with someone, either a porch visitor, or one whose name had come up in a porch conversation. This might be a person whose English might be slightly ungrammatical, or who otherwise seemed lacking in education or cultural polish. While the Aunts passed

over “ordinary” people with a chuckle or a sympathetic comment, they were likely to take more time comparing notes on the “dissipated.” Those unfortunates to be relegated to this category might include someone with physical signs of possible addiction to alcohol, such as a red nose or a florid complexion, or someone tagged as a “drinker” by the neighborhood grapevine. In spite of the recent repeal of the national prohibition against alcohol consumption, local attitudes toward drinking were mixed. For the Dixons, total avoidance of strong drink was still very much a part of their Presbyterian discipline, emphasizing temperance in all things.

There were also quite a few people who were glad about the lifting of legal restrictions, and made no bones about their enjoyment of the stuff. “Sam,” a neighbor and long time acquaintance of the Dixons, and the town’s leading dentist, was known to be rather fond of the bottle. During the summer, from the Dixon’s back yard, it was possible to see lively parties taking place at Sam’s home, grown up people playing leapfrog with gay abandon all over the lawn. While it was too far away to see if the partyers were holding glasses in their hands, there was no doubt among my Aunts that their behavior was inspired by “demon alcohol.” Nannie was particularly concerned about the dentist’s sobriety, because she planned to take me to him for some much needed dental work. It did not take her long to resolve the matter in her own forthright way. She made a special visit to Sam, explaining to him that she was considering bringing him a new patient, her niece, a missionaries’ daughter. Nannie told Sam that she first had to be sure that he would not be drinking at that time. Sam apparently took her talk very seriously, and vowed solemnly to “Miss Fanny” that he would stay sober while he was handling my case. I learned little about all this until my visits to the dentist were long over, but the story of “Miss Fanny putting Sam on the water wagon” in order to take care of the missionaries’ daughter’s teeth provided a good laugh for lots of people in Hickory. Sam himself possibly enjoyed it as much as anyone.

More than ever I longed for news from home, but in spite of improved transport it still took a long time for the first Congo letters to arrive, and the news was over a month old. Nonetheless it was wonderful to have the expressions of love and concern, not only from my parents, brothers and missionary friends, but also from some of my African friends.

In their first letters, written about a week after I had left Mutoto, both parents dwelt at length on the pain of separation. Being too close to tears to talk much about how I felt during my last days there, I had written down some of my feelings in a note to Mother, which I hid in a place where she would find it after I left. In her letter Mother wrote of finding my note:

How we have followed you in thought and prayer all this long week! You would be surprised at the many, many times Dad has said, ‘Well, let’s see where she is now, and then consult the timetable...Guess today you are in Lobito and may be getting a swim...

Your precious note was found Tuesday morning and did me heaps of good, you dear sweet child. How much I do love you! I do want to tell you, though, that you were so brave and bright during the parting and before, and it made it easier for us, even though we knew you were not feeling as light-hearted as you appeared. As we drove away Mr. Worth said, "Believe me, I know how Louise is feeling!" He has gone through such partings and so really knows.

Bill Worth, I remembered, had grown up as a missionaries' child in China. In his letter, Dad also referred to my note and to his own feelings about the separation:

As you undoubtedly know, this has been a dreadfully lonely week for Mother and me, as well as for the boys. The boys have shown that they miss you sorely, though none of us dares to dwell too much on your absence. Last Tuesday, succeeding the Monday night that you left us, I had to summon every last bit of strength I had to keep up and not add to Mother's heavily burdened heart. She found your note and showed it to me, and that just about caused all the tear fountains to open up and flow. Your mother deserves all you have said about her, for she is a most wonderful mother, but I fear I haven't always been the kind of Daddy I should be to you with my lack of patience. To have you away from us for two long years seems more than we can stand, and we have many fights ahead of us...

Mother and I are richly blessed in you children. We have been fortunate in being able to keep most of you with us, even though it did mean long separations from us at intervals. In many parts of Congo, as well as in other parts of Africa and in India, missionaries have to undergo separation from their children for life, as we have had to do in the case of Charles. But we have been more fortunate in this respect. We have also been fortunate in having all of you within the fold of Christ, and that is far more important than any other blessing in the world. We shall just look on your trip to America as the necessary fitting for your life work and hope for your return to us within a few years.

I hope you did not have too disagreeable a trip on that train. I wanted to kick myself for not having bought you some of those apples, but those last few moments at Luluabourg drove all such thoughts out of mind. We are picturing you sitting in a warm hotel at Lobito today...

Both parents wrote that Sid had moved into my room and Mother mentioned another adjustment to my absence. Because of some guests visiting them on Tuesday, the day after I left, my place at the dining table was not missed until the next day:

Wednesday the table looked so empty. Sid said, "Here, move David to the middle and fill up that space." We did too.

There was other news. Mother told an amusing story describing her efforts to get the women in the MBS to choose one of two candidates, Ndayi or Bambi, as the leader for their group. She wrote:

They were too funny in voting. I told them to stand if they wanted Ndayi, and after that I told all who wanted Bambi to stand. A lot of those who had voted rose again. I told them they could only vote once.

Recent happenings at Mutoto and vicinity were covered in all the letters. Mother described the general excitement caused when one of the African men reported that he had seen two lions in the area near a hunting ground frequented by some of the missionaries, including Dad. Since lions had never been seen in this part of the country (only leopards), Dad had his doubts about the story. Tshiamalenge, our cook, called Dad "Toma," referring to Doubting Thomas in the Bible. Mother added, "You have to show Dad before he will believe, but Henry is having a fine thrill out of it." A letter from David, just entering third grade, focused almost entirely on the lion story:

Monday a native told us that two lions were in Daddy's hunting ground. Daddy doesn't believe it. Daddy says it is a tale.

Although they reached me long after the actual date, birthday greetings were in the first pack of letters, as well as in another pack I received soon after. Henry, who now asked to be addressed as "Hank," wrote that he would try to send me a "birthday cake by parcel post with a couple dozen salmon croquettes." Sid, too, hoped my birthday was "a happy one and not overmuch homesick." Sid wrote further:

I am mighty glad I am not going to America quite yet as you have gone. I am having a great time here at home. I am enjoying staying in the room you used to stay in, but I should like to stay in the old room or even stay at Lubondai a couple months if you want to come back and claim your old corner. It is so quiet in here that it is not hard to study or read when I feel like it.

He then went on to describe his activities at Mutoto:

I'm joining several MBS students in a Bible class taught by Mr. Rochester, studying piano with Mrs. Worth, and helping Mrs. Worth organize a "Diyoyo" (noise) band with some of the African children.

Sid also wrote at length of problems with Henry, this time relating to his brother's poor grades in arithmetic, due in great measure to his reported lack of discipline:

Henry's arithmetic has been, or was, a grave problem with us until about two weeks or so ago. I could not get anywhere with him at first, so Mother tried her hand, or rather her patience at it, and crowded it into her schedule before she began school with David

and Billy. He cut up about as much for Mother as he did for me. I took him out hunting and walked him all morning to try to tame him down a little by extracting his surplus-whatever it was in him, none of us could diagnose it. Finally Mrs. Allen, hearing our predicament, offered to teach him. Mother said she had been worrying because the station was not giving her enough to do, so Mother handed Hank over to her and we have lived happily after. He calmed down and worked and consequently got a lot more accomplished.

Hanks own remarks on the matter were characteristically optimistic:

I have begun to study up at Aunt Mildred's now. It is so quiet up in their new house and I can get lots more work done. Mathematics is just coming along fine now. Think I'll make it...

Hank also wrote of how much fun he and his friend, Billy Worth, were having teasing the newly engaged couple, Tinsley Smith and Catherine Minter:

The other day Billy and I threw some rice at Miss Minter. Then I played "Love's Old Sweet Song" on my French harp (harmonica) one evening while they were sitting on the Worth's porch, hiding of course so they couldn't see me.

There were some nice surprises in both packs of mail from Congo, letters from my friends Lusambo and Kavulu. All the letters were in Tshiluba, each expressing good wishes for me and carrying news of happenings around Mutoto. Lusambo's letters, replying to one I had written to her, were very personal, as some roughly translated excerpts illustrate:

July 2, 1934

My friend Mbombo Louissa wa Dibue,

I am writing you this with much in my heart. Is it good with you over there? It is good with me here. I enjoyed reading your letter. I was happy, I sang a song of joy. I wanted to read it again and again.

Another matter, too, is that I am teaching the first, second and third classes. I ask God to help me, to give me the wisdom for teaching the people. Also, I expect my wedding to take place in September. Mbombo Louissa, do not forget me, keep writing to me. I, too, will write you about the wedding.

Another thing. Did you know that Ndayi, the nurse for Lutonga's child, got pregnant out of wedlock? She ran away fast to her village.

Truly, our Mbombo, I love you with all my heart and life. Truly. Accept my 'Muoyo' with joy.

I am your friend,

Lusambo wa Kalamba

In her second letter, written several weeks later, Lusambo asked first if I had received her letter of July 2, and then repeated some of the earlier news, including the story about the pregnant nurse. Then she wrote about a recent incident at the Girl's Home:

I heard from Kavulu that Mbombo will not come again, that you will be in school 7 years. When I heard this my heart became very sad. I said, when will we see Mbombo again? Is this true or not? Tell me. I will be happy if you send me letters from time to time.

Again Lusambo mentioned her upcoming wedding and closed with, "I am your friend."

Kavulu's letters were a bit more formal and included news about my family as well as happenings at Mutoto. Addressing me as "Mademoiselle Harriette Louise," his first letter gave a detailed health report on everyone. Tshimanga, an acquaintance, had been in the hospital with a swelling on his thigh but was home in the village now. Hank had been sick with malaria and was now taking quinine. David had a sore on his leg. Kavulu himself was "very sick in the eyes" and was being fitted for glasses by Dr. Stixrud (from Luebo). Much of the rest of Kavulu's letter was about his activities with Sid at the MBS, and also classes he was taking with Dad. In closing, he had much to say about his concern and that of other African friends for my safety and welfare.

I rejoice in the care of God our Father. May he watch over you well through the journey. We remember you in our prayers...We ask God to help you in your studies all the time until you can come back to teach his people.

So how is your monkey skin? Did you enjoy your trip? I will be happy if I see your letter telling me how things are with you. The grace and love of our Father be with you wherever you are.

I am your friend,

Kavulu wa Kabesa

In his second letter, written at the end of July, Kavulu mentioned hunting trips taken by Sid and Hank, as well as some help he had received from Dad in connection with an incident with a Belgian state official. As customary for all students, Kavulu and some others studying at MBS had gone to "Bula Matadi" (the state official) to have some documents signed. They were not due to pay any fees for the process, but as Kavulu put it, "Bula Matadi asked me and Tshimanga to pay. Isn't that something to laugh about?" Realizing that the official was either ignorant or trying to take advantage of them, Kavulu reported the incident to "Dibue" (Dad). It was all over, Kavulu wrote me, when Dad wrote "Bula Matadi" informing him that no payment was due. Kavulu ended his letter again with good wishes for me personally, and also

some greetings to my Hickory family. His signature added some Ku Mputu names he had adopted for himself:

When we get the news that you have arrived, Oh! Oh! Great joy, to thank our keeper God. Have you started school yet? I will be especially happy if you write me that you plan to come back here. May God the mighty one make you happy. Say 'Muoyo' to Dibue Muana (Charles) and his friends.

I am your friend,

Kavulu A. Barrachin Kabesa

Another letter from Dad, addressed jointly to Charles and me, described more of the problems with state officials, which consumed so much of his time:

My Darling children,

This time I shall write you both, and anything that smacks too much of local color Louise can explain to those who do not understand it. I thought that I might write a few more things about the goings-on around Mutoto that only Weese would really understand and be able to explain.

Have just received notice from the little state man that he is coming tomorrow to collect native taxes, so I shall have to "play" with him tomorrow. He isn't very much of a man, but he does have the grace to make himself rather scarce around here, so I don't have to fool with him very often.

Our sentry, Tshiela, got into a palaver with a messenger of the State who was beating up his mother. Tshiela cleaned up the messenger in good fashion, knocking out a tooth, but the rascal deserved it. So Tshiela has to take an enforced stay in "Bula Matadi's Hotel" over at Luluabourg for about ten days. I was afraid he would get more than that, but am very delighted at the way his palaver came out. The messenger got one month in the same "hotel," which isn't altogether like Grove Park Inn, and has some rather disagreeable tasks connected with it.

The comparison of the jail at Luluabourg to Grove Park Inn, a luxurious hotel in Asheville, N.C., was for Charles' benefit. A letter from Hank gave an even more dramatic and detailed account of Tshiela's palaver. In his story Hank used the adaptation of "kukosi tshilumba," which means to "cut a palaver," a common expression among the Baluba for the process of settling a quarrel. Hank also called Luluabourg by its Tshiluba name, Kananga (as it is known today). As he told it, there were a number of incidents with a large cast of characters, especially a corrupt village chief and an inept Belgian official, Messr. Circle, leading up to Tshiela's own palaver. In summary:

- Chief Muleba illegally planted cotton in a field owned by Tshiela's mother.
- Tshiela's mother went for help to Mr. Edmiston, APCM missionary.

- Mr. Edmiston referred her to Tshibatu, a Congolese arbitrator.
- Tshibatu “cut her palaver,” ruling that “any person who dug in her field again would have to pay a 200 franc fine.”

The rest of the story, in Hank’s words:

As she (Tshiela’s mother) was going home, Muleba sent two messengers to go with her to Mr. Circle. They jumped on her and beat her up and she went crying along with them as they took her by force. Tshiela heard her cries and came to her rescue. He beat up the two messengers and knocked out one’s tooth. The messenger said he would kill Tshiela by the lightning. Thsiela said ‘you can’t kill me by the lightning. If you are going to kill me, kill me now with that knife in your belt.’ The messengers ran away then and returned with reinforcements. They caught him, took him to Mr. Circle, and then caught his mother and took her to him too. They took Tshiela to Kananga last Thursday and I believe they cut his palaver today. Daddy is going to see if he can get Mr. Circle removed and get an officer with some sense in his place (such as Messr. Schillings).

Another story in Dad’s letter illustrated a different kind of APCM connection with Africans working for the colonial government:

Mr. Watt and I went over to Luluabourg to get two small children that a State soldier wanted us to take care of for him, as his wife died about six months ago. We went to the Military Camp and got the children. One of them was a little girl about three years old, and the other was a baby only six months old. The little baby won me completely by its smiles. Meta, Ntumba’s wife, is taking care of the little baby, while a Bible School couple are looking after the little girl. The poor soldier was in great distress when he saw us leave, but I am sure it is the best for his children. He wants them brought up as Protestants, as he himself is a Protestant.

Other stories carried in the letters included news of another locust invasion, unusually heavy rains, and organization of some baseball games. Hank said, “They seem to be catching on pretty fast, except they are scared to death of the ball.”

Chapter 15

Lenoir Rhyne

As fall neared, I began preparing for entrance to Lenoir Rhyne, a small, two-year, coeducational Lutheran college, within walking distance of the Dixon home. Charles and I would have one year together before he left Hickory for Davidson College, Dad's alma mater. Charles, once again, tried to help me adjust to life in America, especially giving me advice about the interests and customs of young people my age. It wasn't easy. The friends he brought to the house were mostly male, and my lack of experience with any young white males, other than my brothers, made me shy and awkward in their presence. Not familiar with any of the popular songs or movie stars, and knowing little or nothing about American sports, it was hard to find a suitable topic of conversation. When I mentioned Congo, someone thought I was talking about Conover, a small town near Hickory. But I tried to fit in. From Charles I learned the words and music of trending songs, such as, "You may not be an angel, for angels are so rare. But until an angel comes along, I'll string along with you..." I also did what I could to make conversation that wouldn't be embarrassing to my brother, trying not to talk too much about the Congo.

My appearance was another matter of concern. I soon realized that in spite of Mother's efforts, I actually did not look "right" in the clothes brought from Congo, especially in comparison to the stylish looks of Charles' girl friends and other girls I met. So I was pleased when Nannie announced that we would go "up street" to replenish my wardrobe. It turned out, however, that Nannie was less interested in style than she was in quality and low cost. The saleswomen in the stores knew better than to offer help to "Miss Fanny." She went resolutely to each rack, pulling out dresses, examining the quality of the material, turning them wrong side out to see if the seams were "notched" (cut with pinking shears to avoid fraying) and not too narrow. Occasionally she turned to ask my opinion on a color or a style, and very occasionally I tried on a dress, skirt or blouse to see how well they fit. Neither my opinion nor the fit were major considerations for Nannie, as her choices were governed mainly by durability and thrift. In the end she took a number of items home "on approval." All three Aunts gathered in the living room while I modeled each garment and waited for comments. In their own dress none of the women made any pretense of current fashion. Polly, a bit larger boned and heavier than the others, settled for "sensible" clothes, mostly chosen by Nannie since she rarely got "up street" herself. Nannie and Rosa Lee, with rather slight and shapeless figures, also dressed conservatively and neatly, sometimes adding a flower or ribbon for decoration. All three women preferred dark navy, subdued shades of blue and occasionally a dusty rose. Nanny and the others did agree I should wear brighter colors, reds, greens or pinks, but their views differed from mine about what was "becoming" among the clothes I modeled. A red patterned dress Nannie considered

“a good buy” because it had notched seams and sturdy material was at least two sizes too large for me, but she insisted it could be altered to fit. My attempts to question this choice and some others I didn’t like were quickly squelched on the grounds that I didn’t “know” about such things. Later Nannie drew me aside and warned me about the danger of raising Polly’s blood pressure by bringing up such arguments in her presence. So, for the time being at least, I resigned myself to wearing what was selected for me. Actually I really like some of the clothes they chose.

The Dixon home was spacious, and its older furnishings had antique value according to those who knew about such things. My own impression, especially of the large living room, was of a rather dark and formal atmosphere. Burgundy velvet drapes covered the windows, darkly upholstered sofa and high chairs, and dim lighting combined to create an austere, unwelcome atmosphere of gloom. Throughout the house were oil paintings done by Polly, some of them copies of well-known art works, and some original still lifes, such as a sewing box. Though dark as well, they gave evidence of some artistic skill. Modern touches appeared in the dining room and kitchen, and most of the walls were painted in Nannie’s favorite color of dusty rose. Most rooms were devoid of ornament. Except for some old fashioned lamps, few of the lights had shades, so naked electric bulbs hung from the ceilings. Since I was accustomed to living in simple undecorated homes, the Dixon style of living made no special impression on me, until I visited other homes nearby.



The Dixon Home

The large house of their next-door neighbor had a mixture of antiques and a more modern, southern style décor, using flowered chintzes in lighter and brighter colors in the drapes and furniture coverings. Mr. and Mrs. Riddle, their granddaughter Bess (about Charles' age), and Miss Garn, Mrs. Riddle's sister, all lived there. Mr. Riddle died not long after I arrived. Although the Riddles were not Presbyterian, and lived a different lifestyle, they were pleasant and thoughtful neighbors, often bringing roses and other flowers from their beautiful garden. Aside from a black handyman the Dixon's hired for tough jobs, my Aunts managed to keep the front lawn mowed with help from Charles, and grew a few vegetables and flowers in the back yard. On the other side of the house was a stretch of vacant lots, full of pines and trees that reminded me just a little bit of the forest I knew in the Congo.

Although I missed the luscious pineapples, papayas, mangoes and other tropical fruits of Congo, the summer fruits of Hickory were a special treat, especially the apples and peaches delivered to us by trucks, straight from the orchards. I spent many hours with my aunts, peeling and cutting the fruit for canning, an unpleasant task in the summer heat, but rewarding as it assured us of good fruit supply during the winter.

Charles spent much of his time, during the cooler part of the days, with his friends on the tennis court. He offered to lend me a racket, but I rarely played with him because I could never match his skill on the courts. Going for a swim would have been a wonderful relief from the heat, but pools were off limits to us. There were too many "germs" in the public pools according to Nannie.

I was excited when the time finally came to go to Lenoir Rhyne for my first year of college. Charles had given me some idea of what to expect, but there were many new things I had to get used to, such as finding my way around the campus, getting registered for all my classes, and getting acquainted with fellow students. As a day student I did not get much involved in campus life, which was clearly centered on the football team. The team had some "stars" at that time, who regularly made the pages of the Hickory daily Record. I did get a chance to attend one or two games, and while I understood little of what was happening on the field it was fun to experience the festive atmosphere brought by the cheerleaders, the band and the wonderful smell of hot dogs and popcorn. I have no special memories of classes at Lenoir Rhyne except French, taught by Professor H., a grey-bearded man who spent most of his time talking about his last trip to Europe and the operas he had heard. When exam time came, he left the book with all the answers in it on his desk and walked out of the room. Once, after I had ventured to ask him a question about French, he called me aside. "You don't have to study this stuff," Professor H. told me. "You already know it. I don't bother with these other people because they will never have any use for French." When my brother Charles did have a use for French later in his academic career, he found Professor H.'s preparation completely inadequate.

Lenoir Rhyne had a small music department, and with some resistance from Nannie, persuaded her to allow me to take some lessons with a piano teacher there. She

even rented a piano and put it in the Dixon living room so I could practice at home. However, this did not work out very well. The piano teacher was something of an automaton, giving me endless exercises without much inspiration. A half hour of my practicing was more than enough for the Dixons and Charles. "Aren't you about through?" they would ask. I wasn't too sorry to agree that it was time to stop. At the end of the term I said goodbye to the teacher, and a few months later the piano was moved out.

A few of the Lenoir Rhyne students were people I had known at Hickory High School. Some other high school friends had gone to colleges out of town, but I saw some of them during the holidays. One of Charles' classmates, "Tiny" Cilley, came from a family with long ties to the Dixons. Going to the Cilley house, only a few blocks away, was always a special treat because it was so lively. We were greeted at the front door by the uninterrupted sound of chimes and ticking of thirty or more clocks of various sizes and shapes, scattered throughout the rambling house. "Uncle None" was rather famous for his hobby of clock collecting, and with little persuasion he was ready to tell us all about them, where he got them and how they worked. "Aunt Lois" had musical talents, played the organ at the Episcopal Church, and sometimes played the piano for us in their home. Tiny also played. The whole family, which included Tiny's older sister and two brothers, was delightful, witty and intelligent. I always appreciated their warm welcome, and felt they were genuinely interested in where I came from. Nannie, who was a good friend of Aunt Lois, always seemed particularly relaxed when she was at the Cilley's.

It was almost a year after my arrival in Hickory before I made any consistent entries in my diary, and then only for a short period when there were "important events" to record. I did pick it up occasionally when I needed to vent a feeling I couldn't share with my brother or aunts. The new experiences and friends made Hickory a happier place for me now, but only to my diary could I express the longings inspired by a North Carolina spring:

Tonight I am so full of—I don't know what—I've just got to talk to myself or my diary since there's no one else who would understand how I feel...Glorious weather, beautiful music and just everything that's happened make me want to do something! I feel like hiking all the way to Congo—and back!

Life in Hickory livened up more at the end of the school year, with commencement activities at Lenoir Rhyne and other festivities all over town. Against the strong objections of the aunts, Charles even went to a dance!

Soon after school ended I attended a Presbyterian young peoples' conference held at Davidson College. Since there was a car from the Hickory church taking others and me to the conference, Nannie and Charles went along with us so they could take care of his college arrangements. At Davidson we ate lunch at Charles' future boarding house and explored the campus before they left me at the dormitory where I would stay during the conference. The conference was stimulating, appealing to my

adolescent spiritual needs, and also introduced me to a broader variety of American young people. My two roommates were both Davidson girls, one of them the daughter of a professor. One night I had a date with a boy from Atlanta. We had a counselor on the floor to see that we obeyed the conference rules, but we still had a lot of freedom. I especially enjoyed comparing experiences in America with other children of missionaries, among them two from Mexico and one from China. A missionary from Brazil taught one of the courses. A special event, noted in my diary, was when "some negroes sang spirituals to us during dinner." I had long ago disassociated American blacks from the Africans I knew in Congo.

One of the highlights of the summer was a reunion with Winnie Kellersberger, Jane Cleveland and some other Congo friends at Montreat, the Presbyterian conference center in the mountains, an hour from Hickory. They were all waiting for me when my train pulled up to the little train station at Black Mountain. After exchanging excited hugs and greetings, we drove a short distance to the Montreat gates and went to a cottage rented by the Kellersbergers.



Louise at Montreat, 1935

Over the course of my weeklong visit, we had a continuous “African house party,” endlessly talking in Tshiluba, scavenger hunts at the young peoples’ club, meeting some of Winnie’s Agnes Scott friends, and hiking around the mountains surrounding Montreat. Near the end of my stay I joined a group making an overnight hike up Mt. Mitchell, the tallest peak in North Carolina. This turned out to be a mistake. Lacking any mountain climbing experience, I was improperly dressed and equipped for the rugged terrain and climate. There was some compensation in the camaraderie along the way, and the gathering around the campfire at the top, but my feet were blistered and I was too cold and miserable to really enjoy the experience. I was barely able to walk when we wearily returned to the Kellersbergers’, and was content to sit for a very long while. While resting I wrote an eighteen-page letter to Congo, telling the family all about Montreat. The final day of my visit was my birthday, and began with a breakfast celebration at the Kellersbergers’, with “watermelon and gifts,” before Winnie and some of her relatives took me back to the train station in Black Mountain.

Waiting for me in Hickory was mail from Congo, bringing birthday greetings along with some bits of news. Mother was particularly pleased to tell me how much her swimming had improved during their recent trip to Lake Munkamba—“such a good time in the water.” Dad was busy getting ready to open up MBS.

Charles, whose birthday followed mine a few days later, received his share of greetings from Congo, and once again we had our celebration together. There was a supper at the Cilleys’ on the eve of Charles’ birthday and another one the next day at the Dixons’. Joining the Cilleys and us both nights were another young man from Hickory and his houseguest at the time, a missionary’s son from Mexico. “Lovely...delicious...such a good time...” I wrote in my diary, describing the games, food, and music we enjoyed. The two young men came back to our house for visits, and one night took Tiny Cilley and me on a “double date to a picture show.” These experiences and invitations from other friends considerably improved my social life.

Towards the end of the summer I met one of Dad’s sisters, Aunt Georgia, for the first time. She and her husband, Frank Clark, had been in Montreat and stopped by Hickory for a short visit before heading north. Aunt Georgia was a tall, handsome and well-dressed woman, and livened up our living room considerably with her bright conversation and keen sense of humor. It was hard to believe, as I had been told, that she had been a missionary in Korea, teaching in a school for missionaries’ children. While there she had married a missionary, but he died soon afterwards and she returned to the States. Her second husband, Uncle Frank, was a business executive. Quieter than Aunt Georgia, he, too, was warm and friendly, and we all enjoyed the visit.

While I was less homesick than I had been a few months earlier, nothing made me happier than the arrival of mail from Congo. In addition to the family letters, I continued to hear from my African friends. A long letter from Lusambo reported that soon after her wedding, she and her husband, Malaki, lost their house and most

of their possessions in a fire. Now they were both back at Mutoto taking classes at MBS. One of her classes was with Mother.

The time was drawing near for me to go to Queens, a small college in Charlotte, N.C., several hours away from Hickory but less than half an hour from Davidson. The cost for Queens was considerably less than for Agnes Scott, which, in addition to the close proximity to relatives, was the main reason for my parents' choice to send me there. After reading the Queens College catalogues Mother sent me her impressions and some advice:

Courses offered are good, equipment looks fine. Am anxious to know how you enter and what courses you take...They speak of many fine entertainments being available...Try to get some good faculty members to advise you on the best things to take in. We want you to take in some, but you won't have time or money to go to too many entertainments. Don't be ashamed to say you can't afford things. We had to turn a deaf ear to many things calling for money when we were in college and the costs have increased 100% since then I know...Another thing I want to warn you about something I did very thoughtlessly and imprudently when I was in college, that was getting up early to study in a big empty classroom building. Colored men janitors were coming in and out...no harm done to me but it was not safe or wise to do. After Grandmother told me of the danger I did not do it. Miss Holladay says that most colleges now are much less strict than they were when I was young...Even if they do not have rules like we had please remember that there are things I want you to observe.

Mother gave me the names of several Presbyterian ministers she and Dad knew in Charlotte, one of them, Dr. Gammon, a seminary classmate and a good friend. She also gave me another piece of advice:

You may be called to talk on Africa but I wouldn't start it if I were you, for you will find it will interfere with your work and you will have time for that later when you don't have so much to do.

Chapter 16

Queens

The small, tree-lined Queens campus was in a residential section of Charlotte, a town considerably larger than Hickory. It had a downtown shopping area of considerable size, several hotels and restaurants, and many churches. A streetcar line ran past the campus.

The roommates and suitemates I had during my three years at Queens were, like most of the students, from southern states, especially the Carolinas and Georgia. Very few of them had travelled outside the country. During my first year, there was only one other missionaries' daughter, a senior, whose parents were Presbyterian missionaries in China. "Mish-kids," as we were called, were more numerous at other Presbyterian colleges, such as Davidson and Agnes Scott. The main social life at Queens was in six sorority houses, lined up in a row on the back campus. Along with other new students, I received "welcoming" invitations to teas at these houses and with no idea of the sororities' purpose, soon realized I was being looked over as a prospective member.

When two sororities I particularly liked gave me formal invitations to join them, I chose Chi Omega, the one that seemed to have more girls sharing my interests. Ione, the girl from China, was a member. When I found out how much it cost to join the sorority, I had to withdraw my acceptance. However, and much to my surprise, the Chi Omega officials waived the fee for me. I found out later that some of the girls took care of the cost from their own funds. On becoming a member, I was even more surprised, and shocked, at the selection process, which could, with one dissenting vote, "black ball" or exclude a girl who did not come from a good southern family, or who otherwise lacked polish. Wondering why I had been so warmly received, I could only guess it was because I was so different and a novelty. In any case, I did make some really good friends in Chi Omega, who helped me adjust to life in college. Mary and Eleanor, both from strong Southern Presbyterian families, with broader interests than most of the other girls, became my good friends. Attractive and self-assured, they were leaders in many campus activities. Mary, tall and dignified looking, but with a puckish sense of humor, was President of our sophomore class my first year at Queens, and Student Body President our senior year. Eleanor, a vivacious girl with a lovely soprano voice, led many of the musical activities. Despite their popularity and relative sophistication, I felt entirely comfortable with both girls as we found common interests, both serious and frivolous. They called me "Crane."

Some classes at Queens were a disappointment, largely due to a very poor administration, especially by the President of the College. Dr. F., a pompous, obese man, given to tirades against "sin" when he occasionally addressed us in chapel, had

little real concern for education. When he finally resigned, under pressure my senior year, there was great rejoicing among the faculty and students. But in the meanwhile it was common knowledge that some incompetent and over-the-hill faculty at Queens were there only because they were related to the President, or had special connections to him.

I had decided to major in French, with a minor in English. I soon learned, however, that there was little to be learned from the French class to which I was assigned. Miss P., the teacher, was a nervous, elderly spinster, who had never travelled outside of North Carolina. The few of us in her “advanced” class had a hard time controlling our laughter at her gross mispronunciation of French words, and apologetic attempts to teach us. Indeed, we felt so sorry for her that we suggested having a French conversation table in the dining hall, but that too was a disaster. As hostess of the table, Miss P. became so flustered that she spooned soup onto dinner plates instead of into the bowls in front of her. I managed to summon up enough courage to talk to the Dean of Instruction, a newcomer to the College, and told him I could not possibly continue the class with Miss P. He did not seem surprised, remarking with a barely concealed smile, “Why Miss Crane, I thought you were a Christian!” With that he made arrangements for me to have special tutoring with Dr. D., a teacher with extensive European experience, who taught both French and Spanish. I very much enjoyed the work with her, especially when we got into French Literature. She often asked me questions about the Congo.

My sociology class was interesting, and I applied some of the things I learned there to a sociological analysis of Kankalenge, the little village near Mutoto. The professor gave me an A on the paper, but he made no comments on the subject matter. An English class, in which Mary and I were both enrolled, was one I liked very much. It was also one of the few where the teacher took a personal interest in my background and abilities, recognizing the fact that I was not applying myself very seriously to my studies. When she asked me about this, I could not find the words to explain that I was trying not to be a “mish-kid.” “Mish-kids” had the reputation of being “studs”, or serious students, and I had learned long ago, in third grade in Hickory, that it was easier to fit into America society, at least in the south, if you played “dumb.” Even with Mary, who was a good and serious student, I had to play a game, each of us pretending we didn’t really need to read all the assignments because we could get by anyway. Unfortunately, we did.

However much I tried to be a part of the group, I was still set apart as a “mish-kid.” In the required Bible class, the teacher, a charming, elderly man, addressed all the students by the names of their hometowns. We had a Miss. Greenville, a Miss High Point, and others, but I got a whole continent as “Miss Africa.” One day the President reminded me, once again, of the special behavior expected of missionaries’ children. Sunday was strictly observed on the Queens campus, with chains across the driveways, prohibiting visitors. Sunday morning we rode streetcars or buses to churches that were not within walking distance, but there was little to do the rest of the day. One Sunday afternoon, I joined some other girls in an activity that had

become popular, riding the streetcar to the end of the line and back to the college. The next day President F. stopped me on the campus. "Young lady," he said sternly, "I saw you yesterday, riding that streetcar! What would your parents say, a missionaries' daughter, breaking the Sabbath this way?"

An all-female college had its limitations, especially since Queens' general social occasions were confined to receptions or teas following academic events. Except for those who had male friends from their hometowns, or already knew students at Davidson and other nearby schools, few of us had contact with young men. I did meet some of Charles' friends at Davidson and had "dates" with a few, but these were generally rather boring. We rarely met other people and did not have enough common interests to sustain a long afternoon or evening, even watching a football game. Obviously there were others around who would have been more compatible, but somehow I did not meet them.

At Christmas and other longer holiday periods, I went home to Hickory, a bus ride of a couple of hours. It was nice to be with Charles and my aunts, but one thing I grew to dread was the detailed account I had to give Nannie each time, concerning how I had spent the very modest allowance she had given me for extra costs at Queens. Expenditures for laundry, bus or carfare and church collections were acceptable. The items generally grouped in my account as "miscellaneous", such as cokes, occasional snacks, movies etc. were deemed unacceptable. When I admitted to the non-essential items, few though they were, Nannie told me that my "reckless" spending of money "from the Board" (the Foreign Mission Board) was likely to deprive my younger brothers of much needed funds for their education.

Back at Queens, I poured out my frustrations to Mary and Eleanor, telling them how my aunt's lectures made me feel guilty one minute and angry the next. They were very sympathetic, but thought I needed advice from an older person, so they reported my problem to Dr. Gammon, the seminary classmate my parents had mentioned. He had given me a warm welcome when I had attended his church with Mary and Eleanor, but I had not had an opportunity to really talk to him. Now he invited me to come over for a "get acquainted" visit in his office. Dr. Gammon was easy to talk to, and let me know right away that he thought my aunt's restrictions were unreasonable. "Your aunts belong to another generation, Louise," he told me. "They obviously don't understand that you, as a young person, are entitled to some enjoyment. I know your parents don't have much money, but spending your allowance for fun now and then shouldn't make you feel guilty." With that he placed \$15.00 in my hand and said, "Here, take this and go have some fun. You don't have to tell your Aunt about it." Dr. Gammon's understanding of my situation was enhanced, not only by his friendship with my parents, but also by the fact that he, too, had a daughter at Queens.

Furlough time for my family was still some months away, but their letters to me, more and more frequently, reflected their excitement over the trip "home." Beyond their obvious longing to be reunited with family, their nearly five years of

demanding work, plus bouts of illness, had made both parents ready for change. Sleeping sickness, caused by the tsetse fly bite, had hit both of them hard, and while Dad was now fully recovered, Mother was still under treatment. However, their busy schedules continued unabated, and with little interruption. A long letter from Henry and David's new teacher at Central School, Virginia Gray, expressed admiration for my family. She "gave me a real visit" with the whole family, as she wrote her impressions of them all, during a visit to Mutoto:

I wish I could change places with you today, wherever you are and in whatever circumstances, because I am in your home and I know how much you would like to be here. The next best thing to actually changing places with you though, is to write to you about your family....

It's such a short time now until you will be seeing them yourself, isn't it? Yesterday your mother, Miss McMurray, Mr. Smith and I went to Luluabourg, where your mother was doing some shopping for going home. Then last night, the boys were trying on the new shirts they had gotten, were putting on Kum Mputu hats at peculiar and rakish angles, and your mother showed us her pretty going-home clothes, until we all got so excited we could hardly contain ourselves. I know you are having moments of excitement just as excruciating, as the time draws nearer and nearer...

You will naturally be most anxious about your mother. She's the same sweet, smiling, energetic self I've known in the year and a half I've been in Congo, but I'm glad she has a furlough fast approaching. She is tired and of course her sleeping sickness makes her weariness harder. She plugs right along with her work with the natives, more than most people would under the circumstances, and seems to keep her patience and kindness toward them, even when she is most tired...The boys are so sweet with her and so is your dad, trying to spare her all they possibly can, and being wonderfully helpful. I think your dad will be ready for furlough too, though he looks robust and strong. He's working mighty hard. Besides his schoolwork, he and Mr. McMurray have been working long afternoon hours on revising the translation of Romans...

David is cute with his blond hair, blue eyes, and lashes so long I wonder he doesn't trip over them. That sounds like a "sissy" description, at least David would probably think so if he saw it, but he isn't a sissy." He's getting along splendidly in his first year at Central School, leading his classes, except for occasional rivalry with Betty Ann Smith.

Henry has grown beyond belief in the eighteen months I have known him. He's a good-looking youngster, with excellent manners, very thoughtful and considerate of the ladies. In fact, I believe he's by way of becoming a lady's man, observant of their good looks and becoming dress, ready to compliment them, and also eager to do some slicking up himself, so the ladies will be observant of his good looks. He has a true tenor voice, and he made A+ on his Algebra test. You may not see the connection between the last two items, but they are just two more reasons why I'm proud of Henry. We're going to miss him dreadfully at Central School next year.

Sid is just grand. Everyone is agreed on that. Good-looking, lots of fun, so intelligent I'm scared of him, friendly, efficient, talented, everything you could ask. All the girls fall and fall hard, and I imagine they will continue to do so until one finally gets him. So far it seems to have no particular effect, though I believe that deep down in his heart he rather likes and thrives on the feminine admiration.

I've been enjoying my few days here in Mutoto with your family such a lot. I think Mutoto is intensely interesting, with the schools here and all the work done with the natives. Then, there is such a splendid bunch of natives! Tonight we've been having the best time. Some of the boys who most enjoy music, and know it best (Kavulu, Peter, Bantu Kai, etc.), have been over at the meeting room with Sid, Henry and myself, and we've been having a musicale of our own. They would sing a while, then I would play a while. They certainly sing well! I know you would have enjoyed hearing them, being here with us tonight.

In her letter, Virginia Gray said that she had particularly enjoyed some of my letters, which Mother had shared with her, because "they took me back so pleasantly to a time eight years ago when I was having the same thrills of doing things for the first time." A graduate of Agnes Scott, she made this comment about my joining a sorority:

I was glad that at Agnes Scott there were no sororities so that I did not have to have the struggle that you had in deciding whether a sorority is worthwhile and worth the cost. But after Agnes Scott I did a year of graduate work at the University of Illinois, and seeing the fraternity and sorority life there, I realized that I could never have been happy there as an under-graduate unless I had belonged to a sorority. It must be much the same in any school where sororities exist... I am glad for you, as I think your family is glad, that you have joined a sorority, especially such a splendid one as Chi Omega.

In her three years at Central School, Virginia Gray, as my brothers told me later, had a great impact on the school, not only in developing high educational standards, but also in providing a well rounded social and spiritual environment, to better prepare the students for life in Ku Mputu. Some years later, Miss Gray married William Pruitt, a Texan, and returned with him to Congo as a regular missionary.

With all the news from Mutoto, it was especially exciting to hear from Dad about his first trip in an airplane. He had gone to Leopoldville for a meeting of the Protestant Council, travelling down by riverboat and train. For reasons he later explained, he returned home by air. After the meeting itself, Dad's train trip to the lower Congo to visit some other missionary institutions, impressed him almost as much as the plane ride because of all the changes in rail transportation:

I travelled third class on the railway both going and coming, as the railway fare for second class, which we usually take, is four times the price of third class. This put me with the "hoi polloi" and the unwashed, but there were three other white people who got on at Leopoldville, though I doubt if they can be classed with the "washed." Then

two nice looking young ladies got on at the station down the line, and both of them seemed very much "washed," stiff and starched. The whole railway line has been transformed in the past six years, the old narrow gauge being abandoned for the standard African gauge, somewhat narrower than our regular American gauge, and the trains move along at a pretty rapid rate. The stations are very pretty, far prettier than the average station on the Southern or Seaboard Air Line in the South, and with the beautiful lawns and foliage plants they look like little pagodas set down in small parks.

Dad was originally interested in making the return trip to Luluabourg by air because it would save him two weeks of travel time, but he also found it was even cheaper than the combined steamer and train fares. Most important, it was an exciting adventure, and, like everything in Congo, had its surprises:

That was my first experience by airplane and I thought at one time it would be my last. It was most thrilling to feel yourself moving along the ground at a terrific speed, then suddenly rise in the air, see the ground slant up, with the water in the streams also running at a slant along the hill (an optical illusion of course), then finally to climb to a height of between 3000 and 4000 feet above the earth. The Congo River looked like a small creek, though at places it is ten miles across, then came the Kasai, which we followed for some distance. In an hour or more we were at Banningville, which an up going river steamer would reach in four or five days. We stopped there to wait for the plane coming from Brussels, and after a little while it came down very near our own plane. Mail was taken from her and transferred to our own plane, and I noted that some of it was for Mozambique, Portuguese colony on the East Coast, and some of it for other distant points in Africa.... What a thrilling feeling to see all of this in a land that knew nothing even so lowly as bicycle travel when I first landed at Luebo in 1912!

During the time that we were travelling from Banningville to Port Francqui I could read as quietly on the plane as I could have in a rocking chair at home, the voyage was so smooth. After we left Port Francqui it was a different tale. A slight shower began while we were there, but we got up into the air and were travelling toward Luebo, when suddenly the plane dropped like a rocket into an air pocket, scaring the life out of me as well as, literally, out of a young lady, who was ill. She fainted dead away, and the others had to work with her. Going was rough in those air pockets, but there was no danger, of course. Then another thing happened that further frightened us all. The plane had both a pilot and a mechanic, both young men. The cockpit opened and the mechanic slumped over in a seat opposite mine, addressing some words in French to me that I could not catch on account of the roar of the motors. He seemed in great pain, and I thought his hand was injured, as it was bent forward, so I massaged it and tried to see if it was broken. He then changed his seat to one next to me and began yelling in pain for dear life. I saw it was something like cramp colic or what? Gave him two aspirin tablets, a State officer helping me, and all the time he was crying how much he was suffering...

This last incident forced the plane to make a landing at Luebo, where the man was taken to the State hospital. He was well enough to travel the next morning, so they continued on to Luluabourg:

Between Luebo and Luluabourg was the prettiest part of the trip. We were above the clouds, which looked like an immense washtub full of Lux soapsuds. We went for about half an hour above the clouds, then came down below them and followed the Lulua River for a distance, finally turning on an automobile road that led to Luluabourg, which we reached within less than an hour after leaving Luebo. Hoyt Miller was at Luluabourg with the car, and we were soon on our way to Mutoto. Louise and Sidney were relieved to see me, for they had expected me the day before.

Almost exactly two years from the time I had left Congo, my parents and the three boys took the train from Luluabourg, heading for the States by the same route I had taken, via Lobito Bay in Angola. They were supposed to dock in New York on my birthday in July, but the ship was delayed and they had to send their greetings by letter. The reunion in Hickory was wonderful. Virginia Gray's letter had prepared me, somewhat, for the changes in my brothers, especially David and Hank, who had grown so much.

True to form, Nannie was ready to help everyone get properly clothed. Dad and my brothers all looked very handsome when they came out in their new suits on Sunday morning, ready for church. As they turned around to begin the walk to church, we noticed price tags prominently displayed on each back. After we cut off the tags, the men became presentable, front and back, and the march continued, ladies trailing behind. Our whole family received a great welcome at the church, followed that afternoon by a steady stream of visitors on the Dixon's porch.

In order to be closer to me at Queens, and to Charles and Sid at Davidson, our parents decided, this time, to make their furlough home in the little town of Davidson. Nannie found a house for us there, close to the campus. Since buses and cars ran frequently between Davidson and Charlotte, it was easy for me to come home often, as it was also easy for my parents to visit me at Queens.

From time to time, Dad was invited to preach at Dr. Gammon's church, as well as a few other Charlotte churches. One of the most memorable of his visits to Charlotte was when I accompanied him to a revival meeting, led by the famous British evangelist, Rodney "Gypsy" Smith. There had been much publicity about the evangelist's appearance, and since he had never heard him preach, Dad thought this would be a good opportunity to do so. The huge auditorium was packed when we got there, but we found seats in the middle. After much singing, praying and dramatic preaching, playing heavily on emotional response, Gypsy called to everyone in the audience to stand up and "witness" to the fact that they now, for the first time in their lives, were ready to "believe in Jesus and surrender to Him." As he shouted out the call more and more insistently, people around us rose, one by one, then in groups, until Dad and I were the only people still seated. "I'm not going to be

a hypocrite," Dad muttered to me. The missionary and his daughter sat it out to the end.

Both of my parents were concerned that I get a good and well-rounded education at Queens. As Mother had predicted, I was receiving invitations from churches, Kiwanis Clubs and other groups, to come talk about Africa. The college administrators, especially the President, put pressure on me to accept the invitations, as it provided publicity for Queens. My parents soon put a stop to it all, reminding the President that they had sent me to Queens to be educated, not to lecture on Africa. Mother also made clear her support for my cultural as well as religious enlightenment. She had come over from Davidson to take me to a special orchestra concert in Charlotte, for which we had been given free tickets. A religious conference was being held on the Queens campus at the same time, and as we walked away, in the opposite direction of the conference, someone, who recognized my mother and knew she was a missionary, stopped us. "You are going the wrong way," the woman told us, pointing a finger in the other direction. "The meeting is here." "We are not going to the meeting," replied Mother. "We have tickets for the concert at Ovens Auditorium." Shocked, the woman began a lecture about the importance of the religious conference, especially for missionaries, but Mother told her simply that there were other things we considered important as well.

Although Queens did not have an affiliation with Phi Beta Kappa, there was a chapter of Alpha Kappa Gamma, a national leadership fraternity, which also put emphasis on scholarship. During my junior year, to my great surprise, I was one of seven girls tapped for Alpha Kappa Gamma (AKG). In the elections for next year's school leaders, my friend Mary, also an AKG member, became Student Body President, and I joined the student government as President of the Student Christian Association. One of our tasks was to prepare the Student's Handbook for the coming year.

While our family was in Davidson we saw our Dixon aunts from time to time, but had little contact with relatives on our father's side of the family. Towards the end of the school year, Dad and I met Uncle Eckard in Atlanta, and went with him to visit my grandparents in Winder, Georgia. They were happy to see us, and Grandfather Crane, especially, expressed his pleasure in my achievements at Queens. It was the last time I was to see him because he died the next year.



Grandfather Crane , circa 1936
Benjamin Sidney Crane
1849 - 1938

Having the whole family together in Davidson was nice for all of us, even though I couldn't be there all the time. Charles' living with us was especially good for my brothers, and gave them a chance to develop a mutual understanding and respect for each other. Charles' intense and somewhat vacillating romantic interests fascinated and confused all of us. One time, when he brought home yet another girl he was "smitten" with, Mother got mixed up and called her by the name of a previous "love." Our small house was rather crowded when we were all there, but in general we learned to cope. There was one problem, and that was the use of the one little radio, especially on Saturdays when there were simultaneous broadcasts of the football games and the Metropolitan Opera in New York. While I always spoke for opera, my brothers and father insisted on football. They usually won. One Saturday, when I insisted we would hear opera because I had spoken for it first, the male members of the family used their collective position to suggest a "compromise." We would take turns listening, alternately, to fifteen minutes of opera, then fifteen minutes of football. I reluctantly agreed, but as my fifteen minutes of music played all of my brothers joined with my father in singing along, very loudly, with the coloratura soprano. Although I didn't really like the soprano's singing, I pretended to be enraptured with it, but the persistent screeching of the men forced me to admit defeat.

The little town of Davidson, familiar already to Dad from his time as a student there, was a nice place to live. Both parents made good friends, and Dad especially enjoyed the association with college professors. He even enrolled, along with Sid, in an advanced French class, and not surprisingly, both men got high marks. The big event for everyone was Davidson's centennial celebration, coinciding with Charles' graduation. In the huge outdoor pageant commemorating the history of the college, which was established in 1837, not only Charles and Sid had roles, but also even

David was listed on the program as one of the “children.” Somehow, Hank managed to avoid getting into the action.



Hank and David, 1937

Before they returned to Congo, I had a chance to talk with my parents about the tensions in Hickory, especially with Nannie. I found them very sympathetic, but not too sure about a solution. After they returned to Congo, I received letters from both parents, in which they indicated their strong feelings of obligation to the Dixons, especially to Nannie, for assuming so many family responsibilities on their behalf. Several other girls from the Congo mission family had joined me at Queens, and when I wrote to my parents about adjustment problems one of them was having, Mother took the occasion to suggest that this girl had not “had a Nannie to help them select clothes that are in good taste and becoming.” “In spite of your feeling her restraint,” Mother continued, “she (Nannie) has been a big help, for her taste is good.” Dad, admitting his reluctance to comment in writing on the subject, seemed more sensitive to the larger problem:

I wished that I could have been at home to talk things over with you about the folks in Hickory, for I do not like to write too much. They have been wonderfully good to all of us, and I am sure they have always acted in the spirit of what they felt is wisest. On the

other hand I can see your side of the matter as well. Naturally, Charles will always be the one of our children whom they will feel the greatest interest in, and in whom they can see less to blame, even for the same things they might blame in you or the others. But they had to suffer for him, and they have done for him more than his own parents ever could. All I can counsel now is to do the best you can with the situation, and try to keep from making them feel that you do not appreciate them.

Something was communicated to Nannie, because she became a little less rigid with me, even letting me buy some of my own clothes in Charlotte. With help from Mary and Eleanor I made some purchases that even Nannie admitted were “good buys.” They were also in “good taste.”

It was hard to say goodbye to my family at the end of that furlough year, in June 1937, even though I now had two brothers with me in Ku Mputu. Our home base was again Hickory, but all three of us spent most of that summer at Montreat. We stayed at Collegiate Home, a hostel for missionaries’ children, and supported ourselves with odd jobs. At first we all waited on tables at various conference dining places, but later I got a job as a salesgirl at the Presbyterian Book Store. We also had housekeeping duties at Collegiate Home, but there was still time for relaxation with some of the other college students at the home, who included a few of our Central School friends from Congo and “mish-kids” from Brazil, Mexico, China, Japan, and Korea. Charles sometimes felt left out of the conversations about life on the missions, but then found he could communicate very well with some who shared his interests and skills on the tennis courts.

All of us had opportunities for broader contacts through the Montreat Youth Club. For one of the club evenings, featuring original skits and performances of various kinds, I wrote a play inspired by my experiences at the bookstore and other places in Montreat. It related particularly to remarks addressed to missionaries and their children by well-meaning but ignorant and insensitive church supporters. One scene was taken literally from my own experience. A well-dressed and buxom lady, dressed in a large flowered hat, meeting a “shy mish-kid,” reached out and took the girl’s hand firmly. “And how are your dear mother and father?” The lady asked. She then proceeded to deliver a long and teary monologue about the great sacrifice made by the missionaries “going to foreign lands to save the heathen.” Before letting go of the girl’s hand, the lady spoke at some length about her own generous financial contributions to the “work.” This scene, familiar especially to “mish-kids,” brought a lot of laughs from the young people in the audience, and somehow news spread around Montreat that a “missionary play” had been performed at the club. Several days later, I was called out at Collegiate Home to meet some ladies who were looking for the “author” of the play. I realized that the visitors thought I had written a serious play about missions, which they could take back and perform in their churches. I stammered out an apology. I was sorry, I told the ladies, but unfortunately I had nothing to give them, because I had “lost” the script. Thus ended my first opportunity to be a published playwright.

The boys and I returned to Hickory for a short visit with our aunts before we went our separate ways. Charles was leaving for a new job, teaching high school English in High Point, N.C., Sid to his second year at Davidson, and I to my senior year at Queens. My last year of college was a busy one, with practice-teaching French in one of the Charlotte high schools added to my regular schedule, and a number of extracurricular activities. As President of the Student Christian Association I had responsibility for meetings and arranging guest speakers, and I also participated in the Student Government Association, presided over by my friend Mary. One of the things we were involved in was a strike by all the boarding students over the poor food and diet in the college dining room. President F., already under pressure on other matters, asked the Student Government to write out some suitable menus, and made a big show of generally supervising their production. For a few days, every time we went to the dining room, the president emerged, perspiring, from the kitchen, and assured us that our menus were being followed and all was under control. For a while the food was actually better.

Academically and culturally at that time, Queens had far less to offer than other schools like Davidson and Agnes Scott. I did have some opportunity to expand my knowledge of music and arts, singing in the choral group, attending student and faculty recitals, guest performances, and a lecture by the American poet, Louis Untermeyer. I especially enjoyed a performance of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," by a group from Atlanta. My Queen's classmates were quite impressed when I told them I had performed in two Shakespeare plays, at the age of ten in the Belgian Congo.

I did not attend an Africa-related "cultural" event, which drew a capacity crowd to two performances at Charlotte's largest auditorium. There was a full account of the event on the front page of our bi-weekly Queen's Blues. It was the presentation of a film called "Jungles Calling," by Mrs. Martin Johnson, "Osa," of a famous explorer and film documentation team. According to the article, it was an "entertaining and instructive picture of jungle life." The Queens article added that Mrs. Johnson and her late husband had "in the past twenty-seven years spent only three years in civilized countries." I wondered if they had met Tarzan.

There were now three other girls from the Congo at Queens: Alice, Dorothy, and Lucille. Though we were in different classes, we got together sometimes and shared news from home. During the 1937 school year, while Lucille's parents, Mr. and Mrs. McElroy, were on furlough in Richmond, Virginia, they organized an "African House Party" for the Christmas holidays. I had been thinking of going to the Presbyterian Training School in Richmond, after graduation from Queens, so it was a good opportunity to look at the school and also see my friends from the Congo. The McElroys were staying at Mission Court, an apartment complex for missionary families on furlough, and there was plenty of room for all of us. Besides the McElroy family, there were nine of us, including Sid, me, and most of the original group of Central School students, except Sanky Stegall and Elizabeth McKee. It was a wonderful holiday, and we unanimously declared we were getting back to Congo as

soon as possible. Actually, I was beginning to like Ku Mputu, and wanted to learn more about it.

Charles had plans that Christmas, to go see his girlfriend in Texas, and High Point was some distance from Charlotte, so I saw little of him that year. Sid and I were able to connect though, and he would sometimes send me postcards in Tshiluba and French, to set up a meeting, or share news.

One weekend, I got acquainted with more relatives, when I visited Aunt Mary, Grandfather Crane's sister, who lived on a farm in Wisacky, near Bishopville, S.C. Her husband, Dr. Yancey Alford, had died recently. Much beloved as a doctor, but not a good businessman, Uncle Yancey had been very slow to collect fees from his patients. He had left the farm, which actually belonged to the Crane family, in very poor condition. According to Dad, when Great-Grandfather Crane had the farm, it was one of the showplaces in the county, but, now all the buildings, including the house Aunt Mary lived in, were in ramshackle shape, with weeds and uncontrolled vines covering the grounds. A few black people still lived and worked on parts of the farm. Seemingly undisturbed by the decay that surrounded her, Aunt Mary, a sweet and gentle lady, welcomed me warmly. On Sunday morning, I went with her to the little Mt. Zion church, where the family had worshipped for generations, and Aunt Mary introduced me to a number of cousins. I caught very few names, or their connections, but a later letter from Dad straightened them all out for me. They included two cousins bearing the family name of La Coste. "If you saw cousins Anna and Helen La Coste," Dad wrote, "you saw two old maids that were like Aunt Sophy Peabody of Bobby Burns, so wrinkled they look like a bed that hasn't been made up in three weeks."

After church, when Aunt Mary took me to the cemetery outside, I found "La Coste," "Sidney" and other names familiar to our family, engraved on the stones. For the first time, ancestors had some personal meaning for me.

Correspondence with our parents and brothers in Congo required less explanation now, after their stay in Davidson, because they had met many of our friends and were more familiar with the places and activities mentioned in our letters. When I was tapped for Alpha Kappa Gamma some of my friends sent a wire to my parents in Davidson, even before I had a chance to tell them about it. Now that my senior year was drawing to a close, I had been consulting with Mother and Dad about a suitable gift to leave the Chi Omega sorority, which had been so good to me. We decided on a pair of bookends, carved from Congo red wood in the shape of elephant heads. Mother had them made by a Kasai wood carver, and sent the bookends to me by a missionary returning to the States on furlough. Thus I was able to leave some bit of Congo in the Chi O house. A number of Queens students, including some in the sorority, had become interested in Congo, and suggested that the Student Christian Association sponsor a project of benefit to the APCM, to which students could contribute. After consulting with their APCM colleagues, my parents sent several ideas for our consideration, such as providing a small model home where MBS

women could be given practical experience in hygiene, nutrition and infant care. Another suggestion was assistance with the purchase of much needed x-ray equipment for the Mutoto hospital. In the end we chose the x-ray equipment, because it seemed the most urgent, and Davidson students had already contributed a large part of the money needed for its purchase. I was very happy that my friends could have this connection to Mutoto.

With all the outside activities, I still managed to keep up with my schoolwork, which was always a concern for my parents. They were constantly reminding me to have my grade reports sent to them in Congo. To ward off any potential disappointment on their part, I had tried to prepare them in my letters for less than stellar academic performance. When they received the reports they were "highly delighted."

After your statements in the last letter, we didn't know whether you would rate higher than "passing" on anything, and here you got "distinction". When will I ever learn, never to believe what you say? You get more like your Dad every day.

They were also pleased when I was selected for listing in "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges." Over at Davidson, Sid had been selected to the office of Second Vice President of the YMCA, which Dad noted was "quite an honor for a non-fraternity man." Our parents had always placed a high priority on Christian faith and academic achievement, but they often warned us about becoming religious fanatics or scholastic recluses. Several breakdowns, some resulting in suicide, had occurred among the APCM personnel. Following the suicide of one of the new, single women missionaries, Dad wrote to all of us at some length about the dangers of "religious morbidity."

It is my observation that the religious fanatic is much more apt to go wrong morally when under pressure, than the person with a sane and happy religious outlook...Either that is going to happen, or there will have to be an alternative, the mind will become unbalanced. I had a classmate at Union who went stark raving mad after his first year, and I recall how during that first year he was pointed to as a saint on earth...Jesus, to my mind, would laugh as loudly as any one of us at an innocent joke.

The last weeks before commencement were very busy with the Junior-Senior Banquet, sorority awards, election of officers for the next year and much writing, by and about, the seniors, in the Queen's Blues. I was featured in one article, entitled, "Life Goes to Party in '48," a spoof prediction of what all the seniors would be doing ten years hence:

Miss Louise Crane, internationally known missionary, in line with the current fashion for giving parties for the benefit of the poor, gave, on the afternoon of October 18, 1948, an afghan knitting party in connection with the AFRICAN PROJECT....After all the guests had arrived and were seated, Miss Ruth Morrison explained that the afternoon and evening were to be spent in knitting afghans for the Africans. If you

dropped a stitch you were to be fined five dollars. Miss Crane received \$3000 for her worthy cause...

Sid was the only family member who attended my graduation, though I received many letters of love and congratulations from the family in Congo. Dad's letter, addressed to "Dearest Weese," once again expressed his regret at our separation:

This is by way of congratulating you on finishing college with a fine record for leadership as well as scholarship. The fact that you are well rounded, not too much of a recluse, and not sticking too close to your books, is pleasing to both of us. We are proud of you, darling, and hope that this will be only the beginning of a long career of usefulness in the Lord's service.

To say that we wish we could be there for your graduation is to put it rather mildly. If I had the money, I would surely travel in that plane to Europe and then across the ocean, and return to the work here, but that is only a day dream, which even in the dreaming makes it harder to think of the futility of trying to bridge the long gap between us and you children.



Picture taken in 1937.
Borrowed cap and gown in order to get graduation photo with parents.

Chapter 17

Communication of Many Kinds

In spite of the many miles separating us, communication between Congo and Ku Mputu was considerably better now. Though still irregular, airmail shortened the travel time for letters. A short wave radio operated by Mr. Stegall at Luebo made it possible for the missionaries to exchange messages directly with their families. I sent a Christmas message this way, to our family at Mutoto. Although our parents complained of two-month old newspapers, delayed further because they were circulated around the various stations, news by radio came more frequently now from the U.S. and Europe. Some of the news was about brewing war in Europe and fighting in China. One day, Bill Worth heard that the mission station in China, where he had grown up, had been totally destroyed. Other news was about friendlier conflicts. Hank, who had become an avid football fan during the year at Davidson, wrote that he had heard radio reports on football games between such teams as Army-Navy, Duke-Pittsburgh and Columbia-Stanford, as well as the first-half score of the Davidson-Harvard game. "Was I surprised to hear Davidson held 'em to one touch-down during the first half!"

Most of our Congo news still came from family letters and contact with other APCM people in the U.S. Our parents wrote of the severe economic restrictions, which seriously affected their work. In contrast to the government's heavy subsidization of the Catholic missions, it allotted a very small amount to the Protestant missions, and that only for medical work. With little additional support from the home church, the APCM schools, crowded as they were, could not pay adequate salaries to their teachers. Some of the more committed teachers continued to work, as Dad wrote, "for a salary about one-third or one-fourth of what they could easily get in the economic sphere." A lot of teachers did resign and had to be replaced with raw recruits. The Normal School, headed by Mother, got most of the new teachers, and although they were conscientious they still required constant supervision. Always concerned about maintaining high standards, Mother found the new teachers particularly lacking in understanding of the grading system. One of them, recording arithmetic grades for his class, simply raised some from failing to passing grades because "he knew they could do better than they had done." "I surely told him a few things!" Mother added. She went on to say that, in spite of the difficulties, most of the pupils were promoted legitimately and the school year ended with the usual festivities:

At the regular program and feast down at the Boy's Home two speeches were made in French by the boys and several songs in French, all of this their own doing, not mine. They were all dressed up fit to kill, dark glasses, silk shirts, etc., but my, they had such a gorgeous time!

In addition to their full schedule with the MBS and the Bible Revision Committee, Dad and L.A. McMurray were both scheduled to go to Kinshasa for a Congo Protestant Council meeting and "Jubilee" celebration of fifty years' presence of Protestant missions in the Congo. Dad had been elected as the official APCM representative, and McMurray was taking forty men to join a mass choir of 400, gathered from all the missions. River steamers were providing transportation for the singers.

In spite of the excitement of the occasion and the honor of representing the mission, Dad was not happy about the timing of the trip. It meant missing all of the vacation period when Hank and David would be home from Central School, not to mention the added pressure on an already burdened schedule. As it turned out he was saved from the trip by a series of unforeseen circumstances. McMurray left early with the choir members in order to have some training time in Kinshasa. Dad was to follow a few days later via train and river steamer, but some sudden changes in the schedules made it impossible for him to arrive in time for the meeting. Neither he nor his colleagues felt the considerable cost of going by air was warranted, so Mr. McKinnon, returning from furlough and already in Kinshasa, was appointed to represent the APCM. As Dad wrote us, "I was happy to be excused, and Mother and the boys were even more so."

The family spent part of the vacation period at the Lake Munkamba with several other families, including some of Hank and David's friends from Central School. Three of the young people had just graduated, and in keeping with a plan to get Central School accredited, were studying for their college entrance exams. How well they and other students did on the exams would determine the school's standing. David wrote me that this group, which included John Know Miller and Ruth Smith from Mutoto, were chosen to take the exams "because they were some of the smartest." Central School now had English speaking and mostly American, students from the Methodist and other Protestant missions all over the Congo. According to dad, all the young people, even those studying for the exams, were having "a glorious time," with much teasing going on between the girls and boys, "led by Henry."

Inspired by Charles' romantic adventures during the time at Davidson, Hank's letters to us often suggested, sometimes not too subtly, his own rising interest in the opposite sex. Among the Central School girls, Ann Boyd Cleveland's name came up frequently in the correspondence. He sometimes referred to her as "O.A.O." (One and Only), when, as he claimed, he was "banging away" at her heart. At other times he wrote that things had gotten "pretty cool," once complaining that Ann Boyd, or "Abie," as she was frequently called, was too much of a "stud." Abie and the rest of the Cleveland family were in the group at the lake. Aside from the kidding among the girls and boys, the chief activity was long distance swimming. Most of the young people had swum across the lake, a distance of about a mile, and two of the girls, Abie and Ruth Smith, had even swum the three-mile length. Hank, however, had yet to swim across the lake. Disgusted about Hank's non-performance, Dad wrote us,

"The rascal plays so much he isn't learning to do the distance swimming he should be doing."

Whatever Hank did choose to do he did most enthusiastically, whether it was having a good time or doing something serious. In one letter he described how he carried on the family tradition of playing Shakespeare roles at Central School, albeit far different from the Holladay productions in which Sid and I participated. As part of the entertainment for a C.S. Christmas party, Hank wrote that he and his roommate, Irwin, "pulled off the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet. Irwin was Romeo, and I as the blushing Juliet, complete with yellow curls (a wig) and a lovely flowery but scanty creation which was my apparel...I had to talk in a falsetto voice, and felt cheap several times when it broke."

Hank's more serious extracurricular activities included helping to organize an athletic program at Central School, which was extended to the young Congolese in the area. Soon after coming back from the States he tried to teach football to some of the boys at the Boy's Home at Lubondai, but had little success at first. Sports interest in general picked up after Mr. Cleveland organized the building of a real athletic field at Central School cleared of the palm trees, which were abundant at Lubondai.

In his letters to us, and to our parents, it appeared that Hank, as Sid and I had done before him, was assuming a "missionary" relationship to "the natives," teaching them what he thought they ought to know, in this case, American-style sportsmanship. Some of the problems he was having were with a few of the better-educated young men, actually teachers, who apparently felt that the roughness of the games was retrogression into savagery. According to Hank, instead of joining in the games as he hoped they would do, these teachers came by while they were playing and gave them "the horse laugh." "If I can get them interested in coming out," he wrote, "I'll feel I've gotten somewhere, but at present it seems beneath their dignity to come out and kick a ball around." Continuing on the same subject to Mother and Dad, Hank revealed some concerns he was having about his own attitude toward the Africans:

Problem #2 is the fellows, who say they are sick to get out of playing. I can't force them, yet I have used every appeal I can think of to get them to come. Monday, I'm going to try native hockey, something they know something about. At first it exhausted all of the little patience I have, when new fellows would complain that they'd get hurt and refuse to play. But when they'd see one of the white boys half bust his neck and come up smiling, they began to quit that excuse. In the end I am confident that every native in the village who can, will want to come out and learn to play. In the meantime I have to work on the village 'smart alecks.' Please pray for me and all of us in this. I think that when the native learns to play with the white man on the same par, he will eventually find out how to work with him better. I was delighted to read in Dad's letter of the attitude the native leaders took in their conference on how to make better the relations between the natives and the missionaries. I don't know

much about all this, yet I can't help but feel that underneath all this things are going to ripen for a revival....I do wish I could learn the natives by heart. There is still a feeling of superiority in my heart, which I am praying earnestly God will remove so I can play and talk with them better.

A little more than two years before, when seventeen-year old Sid was spending his last months in Congo at Mutoto, he, too, was concerned about the relationship between Ku Mputu people and the Africans. Unlike Hank, however, he did not share his thoughts with our parents, but wrote an essay for himself, entitled, "Beneath the Surface." This was his attempt to clarify ideas that kept pressing on him during that period when he was listening to complaints from both sides. He was aware that Missionaries and "the natives" were not really talking to each other. The essay began with a quote from a "missionary" (actually our father) complaining that he was sick of these fellows getting off on this "luse stuff." "Luse," a Tshiluba word for "compassion," had come to have a connotation for "generosity." In this case the students at MBS were complaining about the mission's cutback in financing, which showed their lack of "luse" towards the Africans. As he continued writing, however, Sid saw it as a larger problem of communication between the Africans and the missionaries. As with all of us at that time, Sid did not question the inherent superiority of the missionaries, calling them "blessed with a mind incomparable to that of the native," but he still wondered why "after 20 years of daily contact with the natives, they do not thoroughly understand them and their view point and ways of thinking." Acknowledging that the natives were "very keen observers, perhaps more observant than the whites," he suggested that they noticed and resented the missionaries' feeling of superiority, which was often manifested in discourtesy and impatience with the Congolese. Citing the example of Robert E. Lee (his model of a Southern gentleman) who "returned the respectful bow of a colored man with as low a bow as the negro's," Sid wrote, "If they ever hope to win the natives' entire confidence and goodwill, the missionary must learn to be as courteous to the natives as they are to one another." Still more important, he felt, was for them to take time to talk with individuals:

A personal conversation, if it is anything better than just small talk, a native will remember indefinitely even when the missionary has long forgotten it.

Without identifying him, Sid described an incident where our father had overcome some misunderstandings among a group of Congolese pastors by talking to them individually. Concluding that it was up to the missionaries to establish a more open relationship with the Africans, Sid ended his essay with these words:

Is the difficulty of the task any reason for giving it up as hopeless? If so, you missionaries had better pack up and go home and just stay until these poor people cry for your return.

Regarding this last line, kept private until now, Sid recently observed to me, "This strikes me as about the only line in which I am not siding with the paternalism of our parents' generation!"

How much further communication Hank had with our parents on the subject of relationships with the Africans, either in writing or in conversation, I do not know. In a letter written to Sid a few months later, from Lubondai, he wrote that he felt he had made some progress:

I'm playing ball with the Home boys in a big way, and they are enjoying it as much as I do. I've gotten to know a great deal of the natives around here in this way and I think it's helped me in learning to understand them better.

With the new athletic field near completion, Hank had some plans for expanding the sports program, both for the Africans and for Central School, beyond basketball and tennis to include soccer, baseball and track. He asked Sid's help to get donations of equipment from American young people, and also asked him to contact the Davidson coaches about obtaining rulebooks and information about sports equipment needed. With all his enthusiasm for the sports program, Hank himself was not a particularly gifted athlete. In later years he gained the reputation for being somewhat accident-prone.

More and more the family letters reported the Ku Mputu-style "civilization" that was coming to the Congo. The big news in one of David's letters was that "Our refrigerator is coming soon. It is at Lusambo on the steamer." Always the last to buy anything not absolutely necessary, our parents had, up to now, resisted buying the "Icy Ball," a small ice-making machine operated by kerosene burner. They did enjoy the cool treats shared by other missionaries, so when Uncle Frank, Aunt Georgia's husband, offered to give them a refrigerator, they accepted and ordered one sold by SEDEC, a Congo company. The hospital and parts of the MBS now had their own electric generators, installed by Mr. Worth, but there were no prospects yet for electricity in missionary homes.

Hank was impressed when he made a trip to Lusambo, for the first time since he was born there, reporting it had "150 white inhabitants, a tile swimming pool, white police force and a lively river trade." He further commented on the great increase in traffic in the Kasai:

Speaking of civilization...all you'll have to do soon, if you want to bum from here (Mutoto) to Lusambo, is go out about six miles to the crossroads and stick out your thumb, and either way you'll get picked up by the bus, which passes every week or two, or by one of the big trucks which pass every day. The State has appropriated 1,250,000 francs to work on the Luluabourg-Lusambo road and is going to build steel bridges on the Muanza Ngoma and other rivers, as well as grade and work the highway. They need it, what with the dozen or so trucks which pass over the road every day.

During this time, my own direct communication with Congo was becoming more and more limited to family. Although I tried to keep up with writing to friends like Lusambo and Kavulu, sometimes even to Muamba and other household helpers, it became increasingly difficult. It was hard to describe to my African friends, in Tshiluba, places and experiences so strange to them. Few of the “civilization” changes in the Congo, that so impressed my parents and brothers, were accessible to the Congolese. I, also affected by so many new experiences in America, was becoming very uncertain about my future plans. Congo still loomed large, as always, but there was so much to learn about Ku Mputu. My decision, for the immediate future, was to go to the Presbyterian Training School, in Richmond, Virginia, across the street from Union Seminary where my parents first met.

Chapter 18

Richmond 1938

I had many questions about my future, but I had felt for some time that my college education did not adequately prepare me for useful work in the U.S. or the Congo. Except for teaching, about the only profession open to women at that time, most of my classmates did not think seriously of careers, or of supporting themselves, because they expected to be married soon. My choices were far more limited. I had the necessary credentials for teaching French, but my brief experience practicing teaching in a Charlotte high school made me realize how little I understood American young people with backgrounds so different from mine. With Congo still in mind, a two-year course at the Presbyterian Training School for Women, in Richmond, seemed to be the answer, especially since I heard they were adding music to the curriculum. I had been in correspondence with my parents on the subject for some time, and although they approved of the idea there was the ever-present concern about money. On my 21st birthday, occurring in July after graduation from Queens, the child support allotted to my parents for me by the Foreign Mission Board would automatically end. My parents still wanted to help but their resources were very limited. I was fortunate to get a scholarship from one of the Presbyterian women's groups in North Carolina, but both parents cautioned me to consider it a loan, to be returned, as Dad wrote, "after you get to work in the job for which it fits you." Mother sent me a Dixon-style lecture on the need to watch my spending of the \$225 scholarship from the women, supplemented with a \$15/month allowance from my parents:

This will mean watching every corner in your spending, taking time to watch your clothes, keeping them clean and mended. Being on a scholarship by women who are many of them poor, it will be very poor taste if you spend carelessly what they have sacrificed to give. Of course we want you to be neatly but simply dressed...If you are going to be a successful missionary you must learn to live within a small budget and be happy doing it.

During that summer, before going to Richmond, I saw little of my two stateside brothers. After his year of teaching high school in High Point, Charles had decided to further his education by entering a Master's degree program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Through the McMurrays at Mutoto, Sid got a summer job working with Mr. McMurray's father, a Presbyterian minister, in West Virginia. I got work again in Montreat.

In Richmond, capital of Virginia, and once capital of the Confederacy during the Civil War, there was more sense of history than in Charlotte. Besides the Governor's Mansion, in which four presidents of the U.S. had lived, there were numerous monuments and historic sites scattered around the city, with guides in colonial

costumes on hand to give out information. On some occasions, when Dad was invited to Richmond churches to talk about his work in Congo, he would remark that the Africans had much in common with Virginians because they also worshipped their ancestors!

Richmond was also a center for the Southern Presbyterian Church. The Union Theological Seminary and Assembly's Training School were located there, as well as the Presbyterian educational and publishing offices and Mission Court, the apartment complex for missionaries on furlough. The two school campuses and Mission Court were close together in a tree-lined residential section of the city. At that time all the students at Union Seminary were male, and, except for its first male student, all the Assembly's Training School (ATS) students were women. With some sharing of faculty, Union, the older and larger school, focused on degree courses for theologians and ministers, while the primary purpose of ATS was to train lay workers to serve in the church at home and in foreign mission fields. Students at ATS, some of them older women, had more connections to foreign areas. Beside myself, there were missionaries' daughters from Korea, China, and Mexico as well as one native Japanese.

Among the courses I enjoyed the most were some in the new music program, especially participation in major works like Handel's "Messiah" and Bach's "Mass in B Minor." I also enjoyed a course on "missions" taught by a former missionary to China, and another one on psychology, taught by a very popular professor at Union, affectionately known as "Dr. Tolly." Some ATS courses in teaching methodology, connected to fieldwork in local churches, I found rather rigid and boring. We had frequent contact with faculty outside of classes, getting invited to their homes as well as meeting them at general social events at the schools. We also had regular contact with Union Theological students, socially and sometimes in joint work projects. Up to this time my relationships with the opposite sex had remained platonic, but my father apparently thought I might be more vulnerable to the students at Union, so he sent me some unsolicited advice:

I want to give you some confidential advice since you are so near the seminary, and will meet some, if not many of the students there. This may be advice wasted, yet I believe that I should advise you as your Daddy about being careful about being too intimate with any of them before you know everything it is possible to learn about them. From what Mrs. McElroy tells us, and from what I saw myself, I believe you have a very healthful attitude toward men. On the other hand, I have seen so many tragedies right there at that seminary, where people would suspect it the least, I can not refrain from advising you to be sure of your man before you fall for him. It may sound rather strange from your Daddy, who had the reputation of falling quite often, but even if I do say it, I was sure of my ground before I went too far. I have never yet had reason to be ashamed of any of Mother's folks, and that is the first thing you want to know. It is not at all because I want to be "high-hat" or snobbish, or whatever it is, but in spite of the statement to the contrary, blood does matter. Your antecedents on both sides were good, and you want to keep them so.

There it was again, the old Southern pride in “family” which I had found at the Dixon’s, in the Queen’s sorority and in Charlotte. It had little or no meaning for me, and was certainly not a consideration in my relations with anyone, male or female. I did find some of the seminary men to be more interesting than those I had known at Davidson, particularly some who had plans to go to the foreign mission fields. When I spent a good deal of time with one who was headed to the Congo, rumors started up that we were linked romantically. I liked him but in no way felt romantic towards him, so I was startled by the rumors, more so when I realized he was doing nothing to stop them. Even some of the faculty assumed that we would be going to the Congo together. It was an awkward situation, which I handled very badly. I simply shut off all communication with the man, giving blank looks to some people who tried to offer me “sympathy.” Like most young women, I dreamed of some day finding and marrying the “right man,” and even having a family. Confused as I was however, with building pressure and teasing from my brothers about the danger of becoming an “old maid,” I felt stifled at the thought of a serious relationship with any of the young men I had met so far. Much later, as I became surer about what I wanted to learn, do and be I realized that, for me at least, the “right” relationship had to include common interests and a shared support for growth as individuals. I was probably destined to become an “old maid.”

One of the events, during my first year at ATS, was a tea at the Governor’s mansion, given especially for the missionaries staying at Mission Court, as well as for the sons and daughters of missionaries attending the two Presbyterian schools. I went along with the Hoyt Miller family from Mutoto, who were on furlough at Mission Court. As we arrived at the grand and historic mansion, an impressive-looking man in liveried uniform, complete with epaulets and white gloves, greeted us at the door. He reminded me in a way of how King Albert of Belgium had looked when we met him in the Congo. Assuming this was the Governor, I reached out and shook hands with the man. Obviously quite surprised, he hastily motioned me forward to where the real governor stood, wearing an elegant but ordinary American-style suit. The grand-looking man at the door was actually the butler.

Sid was considering entering Union Seminary after college, and came up for a visit during the spring holidays. Shortly before he came I received a card from him with the news that he was elected president of the Davidson YMCA for the following year, a major honor. He also mentioned that he was about to go on a spring tour with the Davidson Glee Club, to colleges and towns in the south. We enjoyed talking about it all during his visit to Richmond. Both of us were getting excited as the time drew nearer, for Hank to arrive from Congo later in the summer. He would be joining Sid at Davidson in the fall.

As all ATS students were required to do field work in the summer, I got a job helping with the educational program of a small Presbyterian church in Fort Payne, Alabama. It was a sleepy little town, surrounded by red clay hills, close to the Georgia and Tennessee borders. The people with whom I worked were very

appreciative, but it was an uninspiring experience, and I was glad when it was over. The family reunion with Hank in Hickory provided a nice change.

As our parents had written to us, Hank, or "Henry," as they continued to call him, had grown up quite a bit in the two years since we had seen him. Apparently his ability to make friends had served him well on the long journey to the States. After his stop in Kinshasa, the head of the Congo Protestant Council sent a letter to our parents saying that he and his wife had lost their hearts to our brother. "If I was the father of such a boy," he wrote, "I am sure my chest would swell four inches at least." With us in Hickory Hank was as sweet-spirited and enthusiastic as ever, regaling us with colorful descriptions of his travels. While all the aunts found him entertaining, Rosa Lee, who always had a soft spot for Hank, even at his most rambunctious, particularly enjoyed him.

Before the beginning of the new school year, Hank and I had a visit in Lakeland, Florida, with the family of Aunt Virginia, another of Dad's sisters, and also saw "Nanmother" Crane, Dad's mother, while we were there. Aunt Virginia, her husband, Uncle Horace, and their three children, were all most welcoming. It was also a special treat to see palm trees again, and taste mangoes, papayas and other tropical fruits all so reminiscent of Congo.

Back in Congo our parents wrote of their loneliness now that they had only one child left at home. David was also away at Central School for most of the time. Our letters were more important than ever to them, but mail service was being disrupted by the brewing war in Europe. A Belgian ship carrying a lot of mail for Congo was torpedoed. Worried about Hitler's activities and the possible involvement of America in the conflict, missionaries at Mutoto gathered daily around the radio to listen to news and offer prayers that the war might be averted. For us in the States the war still seemed remote since we heard little about it except in our parents' letters. Of more immediate concern for my brothers and me was our scattering to different locations to begin a new school year. Charles took a teaching job at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, Sid and Hank went to Davidson, and I went back to ATS in Richmond. More and more our communications with each other came through shared correspondence from Congo.

In addition to their worries about the war, our parents frequently expressed concern about problems in the mission, not only those stemming from economic conditions and reduced staff, but others arising from the attitudes of some of their missionary colleagues. While there had always been those who did not share their views on the importance of education, Dad now feared that the MBS could be at stake because "some have never yet been converted to educating the native evangelists beyond a smattering of the three R's." There had always been an underlying assumption in our family that Sid and I would return to Congo as missionaries, but none of us were prepared when the possibility came closer to reality. Soon after I returned to ATS Dad wrote that the missionaries at Mutoto had passed a motion to request the Foreign Mission Board in the United States to send

me out to the APCM as soon as I finished my work at ATS. In giving some details about the action, which had come about without directly consulting me, or my parents, Dad also expressed some reservations:

The work for which they are asking you, Weese, is that among women and girls. The idea is more and more veering towards having single women in charge of the Girl's Homes. My own feelings in the matter are mixed. Naturally, the sooner we can see you out here the happier we shall be, but I much prefer to see you wait until we can come with you. Mother reminds me, however, that you are coming for the work of the Lord and not for ourselves, so I am sure she is right.... You would be with us at least a year before we would have to go home on furlough. It might be that with you out here our health would permit us to prolong the term a bit. I wish it were possible to pay your way out here ourselves and have you with us for the time until we went home on furlough, and let you see just what phase of the work you'd like to take up. But I fear that isn't possible. If the committee could pay your way out here and back, we could manage to feed you and probably do even more than that. All of this, however, is pure speculation.

In another letter, reporting that the whole mission, at a recent meeting, had endorsed the request for me to be sent to the APCM, Dad further expressed his reservations:

I must confess that I wonder very much at times if you children will be happy on this mission under present conditions. It may be that one will not find anywhere in this present age, ideal conditions or anything approximating them, but the situation on the mission now is very far from encouraging, and we want you to weigh everything very carefully before deciding to come out here. If it is the will of the Lord, I shall not impose anything in the way of it, but I do hope that His will may be shown clearly and unmistakably...Of course, there is need, and to my mind the biggest problems do not lie on the side of the native people....

Referring to the tendency by some missionaries to prolong dependency on handouts from foreign funds, something Dr. Morrison had warned against many years earlier, Dad counseled all of us:

You young folk who are headed for Africa will have a job on your hands of undoing a lot that your parents have done. Or shall I put it in a better way? You will have to erect a better building on the foundation already laid.

At the same time, Dad was more positive about the Africans, particularly two men who were working with him at MBS:

One of the outstanding encouragements is the way in which Mpinda Danyele takes hold. He and Kanyinda are worth twenty men each. If all our other natives were like these two, we would go forward. Mpinda takes more responsibility on his shoulders, and discharges it better than many missionaries. He and Kanyinda make the work

seem worthwhile, though I am sure we need not despair of the others, nor of the work in general.

Meanwhile, our youngest brother, David, was taking his turn at working with the Congolese, going out on Sundays with other Central School students to make talks in the villages near Lubondai. Far more reserved than Hank, Mother wrote me "he reminds me of you." David was enjoying his first year in high school, continuing his reputation as a top student. A very neatly written post card I received from him at ATS indicated a new interest into which he had plunged thoroughly:

Dear Louise,

Earl King told me that in Richmond you could get all the model airplanes you need, and as I have become interested in building them, I wonder if you could get me some. \$1.00 will buy all I need, and I would gladly repay the dollar when I get home. The kind I want are called "Flying Models." Ask for Comet's brand if possible. You ought to be able to get four 10-cent models. These should have a wingspread of 16 inches at least. That would leave enough dough for two big 25-cent models having a 25-inch wingspread. All of these would be available at a 5 and 10-cent store or any other store you know of where Earl got his. I'll be much obliged to you.

*Love,
David*

The airplane parts David so meticulously described were not hard to find, but getting them to him in Congo was another matter, since mail service of any kind was more and more disrupted by the war. As it turned out, David and my parents were quite unexpectedly "back home" in the States before anything I sent could have reached him in the Congo.

For some time there had been references in family letters to Mother's health, specifically digestive and walking problems. Possibly because of missing letters, we were not prepared for the news that the mission doctors had discovered a condition that suggested cancer. They ordered her to return to the States immediately for further examination and radium treatment. The family left Mutoto on April 12, 1940, but we had very little information of any kind until we received a letter dated May 11, written by Dad while on a Dutch freighter carrying them to the U.S.

Dear Children,

Shall get this letter ready to mail at whatever port we land in, Boston or New York. We were sailing for Boston until yesterday, when we got news of the invasion of Holland and Belgium by Germany, and the Captain called us on deck to talk to us. Among other things that he said, he told us he would make for the nearest neutral port, and that this would be New York. On the other hand, some of the others tell me this morning that we shall sail to Boston first, as this is the nearest of the two ports. Just when and where we shall land is not yet decided. We are not allowed to use the

radio at all, so we shall not be able to let you know anything until we actually land either in Boston or New York.

Naturally we were all excited yesterday morning when this news came to us... Preparations were made for a complete blackout, so we have been travelling in complete darkness with all portholes sealed with iron seals, doors shut, and all precautions taken so that no light is able to issue from the vessel. There is little danger, so far as any of us knows, and these are simply precautions against any German raider. There is a very heavy cargo of rubber and gold, both of which are contraband. Germany would give a tremendous price for the cargo.

Perhaps I might begin at the beginning and give you a little account of our movements. You may not have received any of our air letters. We had not received a word from Louise when we left the field, not since December. Some of the air mail had taken even longer than the ordinary mail. So you may not have received all our air mail...At risk of repetition, I shall tell you that Drs. Smith and Stixrud ordered us home so that your mother can get radium treatments at once. Mr. Craig managed to get passage by this steamer out of Cape Town. We left Mutoto on the 12th of April, spent Friday night in a hotel at Luluabourg, got on the train before 5 o'clock the next morning, and had a long, tiresome and hot trip to Elizabethville, which we reached at 10 o'clock the next morning.

The letter went on to describe a very interesting trip on a succession of trains, through Rhodesian territory (now Zambia and Zimbabwe) on to Cape Town, South Africa, where they stayed at a mission center. Always responsive to attractive women, Dad could not refrain from a few less than complimentary remarks about some of the missionary ladies they encountered at the center:

Some of the English missionary ladies run true to missionary form in being plain in features to the point of being distressingly plain of face, but they are nicer than their looks. One lady looked as if the Lord had turned her loose before he fully completed her face. Still, she was nice. The lady in charge of the home is far from being a beauty, but she was exceedingly nice to us.

While they were waiting to sail, Dad and David took some "rambles" around the area, including a cable car trip up Table Mountain, and a bus trip to the Cape of Good Hope. Later, on the boat, they passed Saint Helena, the island where the British imprisoned Napoleon.

Dad's letter and one from Mother, expressed fear that they would not be able to attend my graduation at ATS, both because of the uncertainty of when and where they would land, as well as the outcome of their visit to a medical specialist. By the time they did arrive I had already graduated and was able to meet them in Baltimore where Mother was undergoing extensive examinations in a clinic recommended by the mission and Board doctors. Fortunately the news was good. She did not have cancer, but would need medical attention for some months. After consultation with

the Foreign Mission Board our parents took a temporary leave of absence from Congo, while Mother recuperated and Dad took on speaking assignments from the church. They decided to stay in Davidson again, although, with Sid's graduation, Hank was the only one left in college. Our immediate family was fairly scattered, with Charles teaching in Atlanta, Sid studying at Union Seminary in Richmond, and I beginning a new job Waynesboro, Virginia. But for a short time, at least, we again had a place to call "home" in America. My friend, Winnie Kellersberger, now married to Lachlan Vass, son of one of the early APCM missionaries, was already headed for the mission in Congo, as were some of my classmates and friends at ATS and Union Seminary. For me, my return to the Congo was still on "hold."



Bessie Louise Dixon, 1940



Charles LaCoste Crane, 1940



James Eckard Crane, 1940, at Davidson

Chapter 19

The War Years

My work as Director of Religious Education at the First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro, Virginia, introduced me to yet another different kind of American community. Waynesboro was a small industrial town, dominated by a large DuPont plant, lying along the Skyline Drive in the Blue Ridge Mountains not far from the Shenandoah National Park. DuPont's presence drew a mixed population of "Yankees" and Southerners, but fewer blacks than I had seen in other Southern towns. Most of the buildings were relatively new, with the shopping area confined largely to one street. Though the town itself had no special distinctive appeal, the natural beauty of the surrounding area was breathtaking.

My job at the church focused particularly on educational programs for the children and young people of the church, including the Sunday school, youth meetings and choir training. With a supportive minister, a man who had actually known my father and his family in Georgia, and with good help from some of the members, I learned a great deal. Obviously, "missions" was something I stressed with the young people, giving them more than they probably wanted to hear about Congo. Still, with no credit due me, three of the young people with whom I worked eventually became missionaries. Two of them went to Japan, while Ruth Phipps started in Congo as a single teacher at Central School, then married Bill Metzel. They stayed in the field as missionaries until very recently.

When Dad and Sid visited me one weekend, Dad preached at several nearby country churches being served by another minister friend of his, and Sid preached as a substitute for the pastor of my church, who was on vacation. Sid also met with my young people's group. Writing me afterwards, he expressed his enjoyment of the occasion, also noting my scarcely disguised nervousness about his public performance:

The experience of preaching in a "first church" was good for me, though to judge from the expression on your face during the greater part of the service, it wasn't particularly delightful to you! I hope you'll be able to listen to me someday with some degree of comfort and assurance...The talk I enjoyed most was to the young people. They were such a responsive, alert group that it was fun to cut loose at them, even if I wasn't specifically prepared, but only generally prepared from a stock of ideas accumulated in Young People's Work during the last four years, and in Dr. Tolly's classes.

Dr. Tolly, the Union Seminary professor with whom I also had studied at ATS, was an old friend of our father. Following the weekend in Waynesboro, Dad spent a week in Richmond with Sid, mainly to see "Tolly" and other old friends, and look up

some work on the Old Testament at the seminary. When his presence was discovered, however, the seminary professors kept him busy talking to students, and also invited him to speak at the Sunday evening service of the seminary community church. According to Sid, we had good reason to be proud of our father!

It was grand having Daddy here all week. He got a kick out of returning to scenes of his student days and out of seeing again his old comrades like "Tolly" and Ben... Daddy talked three times in chapel and made a good impression on the boys, I believe, whereof I was quite proud, naturally. Sunday night he spoke in the Ginter Park Church and gave a splendid address. Somewhere in the middle he lost his place in his notes and just delivered the best parts of the three or more addresses I've heard before! It was quite unified, though, and thoroughly convincing. A great man is our Pop!

Our parents were living in uncertainty about their future plans, all depending on health clearance and availability of neutral boats to Congo. Some other missionaries were returning on an Egyptian ship, the "Zam Zam," leaving New York on March 10, 1941, but the doctors decided Mother was not ready to go that soon. It would be at least 6 months before another neutral ship would be available, so Dad continued his work for the Foreign Mission Committee, speaking to church groups all over the south. This delay in their return proved to be very fortunate because they were spared the harrowing experience of their colleagues on the "Zam Zam," when it was torpedoed at sea. The missionaries, including some children, were in the water for quite some time before they were finally rescued.

As time dragged on, with travel to Congo becoming more uncertain than ever, Dad finally accepted a temporary position as Dean of Theology at Stillman Institute, a Presbyterian training school for black Americans in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Although their move put them further away from all of us, it was a place where both parents could serve out the waiting period usefully, as Mother also taught some classes at Stillman. They missed the small college-town intimacy of Davidson, and good friends they had made there, but the presence of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa did offer interesting contacts and some new friends. David enjoyed the variety of activities at the Tuscaloosa high school, the largest he had ever attended. He played on the football team, and continued his record as an "A" student.

At Davidson, Hank plunged enthusiastically into a variety of extracurricular activities, joining the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity (according to Mother, "struggling with the dancing question") and also becoming quite active in the YMCA. In February 1942 he was one of nine Davidson delegates sent by the "Y" to a "Post-War Peace Planning Conference," at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. The conference, which included representatives from industry, labor and agriculture, as well as some foreign students, had some internationally prominent speakers such as Arthur Sweetser (Secretariat of the ex-League of Nations), Josephus Daniels and Eleanor Roosevelt. Hank was especially impressed with Mrs. Roosevelt. He called her "the ugliest woman I have ever seen," but admired her "remarkable personality

and winning smile that makes you forget her looks." He wrote to Mother and Dad about the experience:

Saturday night Eleanor addressed the conference, and our delegation sat right down in front. She gave a very fine address on "College Youth's Part in Winning the War and Peace." What made us admire her even more was when she answered questions after the address. Some of the questions were difficult but she didn't hesitate a bit.

The war had become even more personal for all of us with the news on December 7, 1941 of the attack on Pearl Harbor. I thought immediately of my four brothers, three of them already at, or near, draft age. Even the Jubilee celebration of the APCM's fifty years presence in Congo, recounted to us in great detail in a letter from Lubondai on December 7, seemed remote by comparison. War was here and now. Charles was already preparing to enlist in the Navy.

Charles' ever ardent pursuit of young women had yet to develop into a lasting relationship, and Sid's commitment to a young woman in North Carolina was still pending. The younger brother, Hank, however, lost no time in deciding on his "One and Only." Soon after he and Abie started college in the States, Hank at Davidson and Abie at Austin College, in Texas, they mutually agreed to free themselves from any "steady" romantic relationship, and "look around" the wider field. Each of them found new friends of the opposite sex, but as they neared their senior year at college the old romance between the two "mish-kids" returned to full bloom. In early summer 1942, while Abie was visiting the family in Tuscaloosa, she and Hank announced their engagement. Since they still had another year of college, the wedding date was not yet set, but David wrote me that they reminded him of cartoons showing "two little love birds up in a tree with their heads together." David also thought it was pretty funny that Hank had got ahead of his two older brothers, especially Charles, who boasted so frequently of his technique with women.

Our ever-mobile family had some more changes that fall, Charles starting his training for the Navy at a base in Chicago, and I returning to Charlotte, N.C. in a new job. I had genuinely enjoyed the work and people in Waynesboro, but when some offers started coming in from other places I began considering a move to a more challenging position. The job I accepted was that of Director of Religious Education, at First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte. This was an old, steeple-topped church in the heart of downtown, set on a lawn covering an entire block, and surrounded by a tall iron fence. Unlike Waynesboro, the congregation was more homogeneously Southern, including some families who had belonged to the church for several generations.

My job, again, was with young people and children and involved some music work as well. The minister and church members were cordial and helpful but I felt the most immediate rapport with the young choir director, Earl Berg, and his wife Eunice, who played the organ. They were fine musicians. Earl taught voice and

directed choral groups at Davidson, and both of them were involved with other musical activities in the area. Singing in the adult choir, and taking voice lessons from Earl, I learned a great deal from the Bergs musically and also became good friends with them. Brought up as Lutherans of Scandinavian background in North Dakota, they, too, were outsiders, and shared my concerns about Southern prejudice and provincialism. Most of the people greatly appreciated the quality and choice of music the Bergs introduced to the church, ranging from the finest of the early composers, such as Palestrina and Byrd, to the works of Bach and Brahms. There were some, though, who complained that the organ was too loud or wished the choir would sing something more “familiar,” like “Sweet Hour of Prayer.”

I also had my own run-ins with the “natives.” I had a generally good and responsive youth group, but some of their parents were upset when I organized a project putting them in contact with some young black people in Charlotte. One parent, a church elder, quoted Bible verses that he claimed supported his belief in total separation of white and black people, implying that blacks were inferior to whites. When I talked to the minister about the problem, I found him rather ambivalent. He admitted that the elder in question, and others in the church, were “conservative” in their views, but they were not too different from Presbyterians to be found elsewhere. I soon learned that the minister himself was not a man to take a clear stand on anything, and in fact he did not stay at that church for very long.

My parents were having their own problems at Stillman, especially relating to racism. Mr. J., the white director of the school, was himself not very well educated, and with little vision for the school was quite ineffective in his dealings with the mixed black and white faculty. My parents found some of the faculty to be competent and socially congenial, especially two single white women who occupied an apartment on the top floor of their house, and a recently arrived black couple from Cincinnati, Ohio. They were delighted to find the Ohio couple shared their love of good music, and looked forward to joining them when their home orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony, came to perform at the University of Alabama. It was with great dismay, however, when they discovered that blacks were not allowed to attend the concert. Once, when Mr. J. found out that Mother and Dad had invited their black colleagues to dinner in their home, he reprimanded them, accusing them of breaking the Stillman rules on black and white segregation. It was Mother who spoke up to him: “Mr. J., “ she said firmly, “what you do at Stillman is your business, who I invite to my home is my business!”

Meanwhile Dad was finding problems stemming from poor expectations for blacks, similar to those he had faced in Congo. Referring to this in a letter to us, he wrote, “There is too much ballyhoo in the training given the Negroes here at Stillman, as well as in some of the other Negro institutions that have come under my notice.”

At Christmas in 1942 we had what turned out to be the last gathering of our entire family in Tuscaloosa. It was at once a happy time and a time of great uncertainty for all of us. Charles, now a Lieutenant JG in the Navy, was there in his uniform, soon to

ship out to parts unknown. Sid was to graduate from Union in a few months, then maybe take a job with a church, or maybe go into chaplaincy service. After Hank's graduation he planned to enlist in the Army and marry Abie, but no dates were set. In another year, David would start at Davidson, but he wasn't sure he could finish before he would have to enlist. Dad and Mother, as well as myself, were unsure where we would be in a year. While we tried to make light of the cloud of war that hung over all our plans, it was never far from our thoughts, even when we were joking around. There was an old piano in the house, around which we gathered frequently to sing Christmas carols and other songs found in a motley collection of music, including a book of "Opera Classics." Partly in deference to me, my brothers started leafing through the "opera" book, and then became enthusiastic when they discovered "The Soldier's Farewell" from *Faust*. It was easy to sing, and they liked the music, but they got even more carried away with the words, starting, "Even bravest heart may swell at the moment of farewell..." Following Charles' lead, standing tall in his uniform and with his hand dramatically held across his chest, the men sang lustily and with much passion in their strong tenor voices. Underneath the fun and frivolity of the hammed-up scene lay the fear and foreboding of an all too real farewell.



Family photo, 1942. Taken the last time the whole family was together.

Signs of American involvement in the war were everywhere. Although the fence surrounding the First Presbyterian Church in Charlotte had gates that were generally kept locked when there were no church activities, more and more men in uniform found their way in to gather and relax on the spacious, immaculately kept lawn. Some of the older church members frowned on this "intrusion," but general tolerance prevailed. Troops were moving all around the country. Charles, assigned to a ship making maneuvers off the California coast, still managed to find time for socializing on his shore leave. In the course of it, in April 1943, he met Frances, the woman he had been looking for. He wrote us that it was love at first sight for both of them. Frances, then living in San Francisco, accepted his proposal of marriage and they decided to tie the knot at once, before Charles shipped out for duty in the Pacific. None of the family could get to the wedding but we had full details from Charles.

Following four weeks together, mostly in the San Francisco area, Charles had to leave his bride, "about the hardest thing I ever went through," he wrote, and head to places with only a "Fleet P.O." address. When Frances later came east to visit us all, we liked her and felt Charles had made a good choice.

Spring of 1943 also marked important events and decisions in Sid's life. He graduated from Union Seminary, had a calling to a church in North Wilkesboro, N.C., and got engaged to Mary Council Horne, a young woman he had been working with in North Carolina youth groups. As President of the Southern Presbyterian Assembly Youth Council, he made a major address at the church assembly in Montreat that summer.

Abie Cleveland and I were the only family members to attend Hank's graduation from Davidson. Hank and Abie hoped to have their wedding in October, but it all depended on how soon he would finish his Army training. Anticipating Hank's training at Fort Benning, Georgia, Abie took a temporary job in Atlanta while he spent some time with the family in Tuscaloosa, awaiting his orders. David graduated from high school and was especially glad to have some time with his brother before he himself left for Davidson. Recently "smitten" with a girl named Betty, his first affair of the heart, he wanted to talk to Hank, "man to man about women." Hank was ready to share his vast experience and more. As Mother wrote us, "Henry, as usual, kept us all laughing with his final instructions to David."

The possibility of my going to Congo had come up again, this time from the Foreign Mission Committee itself. I was still not at all sure about what I wanted to do, and was glad to find my parents quite supportive. Mother wrote about a conversation she had with one of the Foreign Committee members:

I told him that you were not sure that you wanted to go out there to live alone and we were not so keen on it either. He spoke up at once and said, "I don't want to see Louise go out there single either."

Of course we have prayed for a long time that if the Lord wanted you to go, that the right man might be found, that is, if He meant for you to marry. It is a hard thing to give advice on, especially when I know how great the need is, and how much they want you there in the work. I believe that if He is calling you there, He will make it plain to you, and will open up the way and will make you happy and useful, if and when you go. How I wish I knew what our future is to be. Letters from out there make us so homesick for the work, and yet I am sure He has kept us here so far. The belief in His plan for our lives is a great comfort.

Dad wrote a postscript, basically confirming what Mother had said, adding:

There is plenty of need for you there, but I doubt very seriously the wisdom of your trying to do evangelistic itinerating under the conditions in Congo, unless accompanied by a family...After all, we have to learn God's will for our individual lives, and no one can interpret it for us.

My parents' apprehension about my going out to Congo was increased by the recent news of another single missionary's suicide in Congo, a woman who had taught both Sid and Hank at Central School. I shared their concern to some extent, but for me it was not the question of going as a single missionary that bothered me. I still loved Congo and the Congolese, but I wasn't sure that this was the kind of work I wanted to do.

My parents own uncertainty about returning to Congo persuaded them to continue at Stillman for another year. They were pleased that Robert Bedinger, a friend and former APCM colleague, who had returned to the States some years earlier, had recently been assigned as a "home" missionary, to work with the "Negro" program in Alabama. With Bedinger's leadership, they were more hopeful that the educational standards and morale at Stillman would improve.

Two other family weddings took place before the end of 1943. Sid and Mary Council got married in late August, and Hank and Abie got married in December. None of us were present at the latter event, which took place in Decatur, Georgia, the day after Hank graduated as a lieutenant from his Army training at Fort Benning. For over six months, "home" for the latest newly-weds, at least on weekends, was rented rooms from which Hank commuted to his army base at Fort Blanding. Along with other young officers, he was training new recruits. All of them, officers and trainees, were destined to go overseas as casualty replacements.



Abie and Hank in Jacksonville, Florida
Spring 1944

Inevitably some of the “home folks”, especially our parents and aunts, began to worry about how our young men might be affected morally and spiritually by their war service. Charles addressed some of these concerns in a letter to the family:

You will naturally and rightly assume there is some liquor consumed and may need some reassurance that I haven't gone in too much for the Navy's weakness in this respect. I must confess to either two or three beers on some of my occasional visits to the club, but nothing more than this, which is not enough to affect me in the least, except to give a slight feeling of relaxed tension after the completion of a long trip. This not by the way of apology, but only to answer squarely a hint of worry that I've noticed in one or two of your letters, Nannie and Mother...

Frances has expressed anxiety at times that the long strain and monotony of this existence will hurt me in some way psychologically and spiritually, but I will tell you as

I have her that I do not feel any essential change from what I was when I came out. Perhaps I'm more serious. It is hard to regard life as quite the gay, socially and intellectually stimulating thing it was in, say, Atlanta. Also, one has a tendency to look more objectively and critically at the life he left behind him in the States, to question some of its values and regard with considerable cynicism some of those which seem to be held highest in the homeland, as far as he can tell: self-interest above service, politics above patriotism, a war that is cheaply, often piously, emotional rather than realistic. But with the rise in cynicism comes also a rise in self-discipline, and if one has any depth of faith and intestinal fortitude at all, he finds that he can go through an amazing variety of things without being too much warped by them. Having a family like you are got me off to a pretty good foundation for this adventure.

Afraid that his own enlistment in the Navy might have influenced David to apply to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Charles wrote at length to his younger brother, advising him to consider carefully the pros and cons of an academy appointment, especially its implication for a lifetime of military service:

I can't help wondering if you share in the age-old illusion, which I certainly had plenty of at one time, that there is something glamorous about a uniform that transforms the wearer magically into a rather super being. The press has certainly done its share to encourage this subtle envy of the picturesque drama of a naval officer's supposed existence. I wonder how many Apollo-handsome, white-clad ensigns have kissed how many pretty girls on the pages of how many magazine advertisements? Or how many Nelsonian admirals have been pictured, gazing impassively through narrowed lids across a turbulent sea to where the enemy fleet is silhouetted on the horizon? Such stuff looks stirring on paper, but it is not the Navy...I know any attraction of this sort will not be more than a subconscious motive for your wanting to get the appointment, and that the logical ones will seem to be: 1) the best opportunity to serve your country, 2) the general advantages of an academy education, 3) the prestige, security and interesting features of a career as an officer. The last point I will not argue—if, after the soberest consideration, acceptance or reflection on the good advice of Mother and Dad, your better professors at school, and, if possible, one or more Academy graduates, you still think the Navy is your career, then by all means keep after that appointment. But if you're not quite so sure, let me suggest some possible alternatives that bear on the first two of those listed motives. First of all, it matters little whether you serve your country as a reserve officer or a regular, so far as this war is concerned, but with your background and aptitude you owe it to yourself to try to bide your time until you can become an officer. If the good engineering and technical training of the Academy appeals to you, remember that it is always pointed directly toward marine engineering only, and that you can get a better all-round engineering course at Georgia Tech...I think your record would also get you into Naval R.O.T.C. and that would seem to be an awfully good compromise if you are in any way uncertain about tying yourself up for a lifetime in the Navy...I have continually stressed the point, in speaking of your possible appointment, that it involves making up your mind to lifetime service... As a matter of fact, I do not think the Academy graduate is justified in any other course of action after taking such a thorough education at the expense of the government. We're going to

have a big Navy for a very long time, so don't fool yourself with negative rationalization that you'll "probably not stay in the Navy, even if you "do get through the Academy." I don't want to try in any way to make up your mind for you and will be proud of you, whatever course you take.

In the end David did receive his appointment to Annapolis but turned it down. His roommate and several other friends at Davidson had already left for service, and his own papers had been sent to the draft board. It was still some months before his 18th birthday, but he was considering enlisting in the Navy by fall in order to get some advance training.

In early April 1944, much to our surprise, our scattered family received letters from both parents, giving news of Mother's gall bladder operation. Her letter was written before she went to Birmingham for the operation, and Dad explained that she had not wanted any of us to worry over her until the operation was over. She was now "doing nicely" he said. Dad added that they had both been surprised that the operation was necessary, but it was a decision made by the Foreign Mission Committee doctor, as well as the doctor in Birmingham who performed the operation. By the summer they had the decision from the Foreign Mission Committee for which they had waited so long. Mother's health was cleared and arrangements were being made for their return to Congo. They were scheduled to sail in early October, along with some other APCM missionaries.

Overjoyed as they were to be going back to the people and work they loved, the closeness to family that they had enjoyed for the past 4 years made the overseas separation harder than ever this time. As our parents were packing up to leave Tuscaloosa, David, the only one of us who had been able to spend his high school years at home, wrote from Davidson, expressing for himself, but actually for all of us, what it had meant to have the kind of home our parents had provided us:

It is awfully hard, I realize, for you to go back to Congo, never again to maintain a home for us to stay any length of time. But let me tell you, the home that has always been such a closely knit unit in spite of separation will remain forever with all of us as the dearest heritage that we have. No, you haven't been materially wealthy, but besides giving us a wonderful education with the little you had, you've given us a wealth of love, Christian atmosphere, courage to carry our loads and ambition, and that is priceless. God forgive me if I ever allow my talent to go unused and unappreciated. You may be proud of us, but it's all of your own hand, and it is us who fundamentally have cause to be unutterably proud and thankful of our good fortune.

By the time our parents reached North Carolina on their way north, Sid and I were the only children at hand to say goodbye. David had enlisted in the Navy, and the other two were on the battle-fronts, Charles in the Pacific, and Hank in Europe. I had a brief visit with Mother and Dad, first in North Wilkesboro with Sid and Mary Council, then in Hickory with the Dixons, before waving them off on the train to New York. Dad wrote me privately, later, that the Dixon sisters, as well as Charles, were

not at all happy about their return to Congo. They apparently could not understand my parents' commitment for life to the work that they had started so many years before.

They reached New York on October 3, and sailed from Philadelphia a few days later. The trip this time, via Lisbon, Portugal and Lobito Bay in Angola, was even longer than their first trip to the Congo in 1912. They reached Mutoto on January 7, over three months later. Their final destination was, as in 1912, the Luebo station, because they were being sent there on loan from the Bible School to help out in an emergency situation due to a general shortage of missionaries. Dad explained it in a letter to us, adding a comment on the welcome at Mutoto:

The Luebo station asked for us especially because we had been at Luebo and have so many native friends there, and since most of the older missionaries will be going on furlough sometime soon they wanted us there to advise the younger missionaries...We got a wonderful welcome here and every few minutes there are natives there to tell us how happy they are to see us...

In the family letter, Dad addressed a special note to Abie, now in Texas since Hank had gone overseas, describing seeing her parents, "Nonie" (Lenoir) and Roy for the first time since Hank and Abie were married:

Nonie and Roy were at the station at Tshimbulu yesterday, and when I kissed Nonie she said, "What are doing kissing me?" But my reply was that we are certainly in the same family now.

He added that the two families planned to get together soon and talk about their "bana" (children). Referring to the anxiety all of us were having about Hank's being on the front lines, he said:

We have been most anxious for you, honey, in these times of the German push in Europe, and have shared your feelings, you may be sure. But since we have no bad news, we can only hope that the news is good, and that Henry is safe.

Though censorship prevented full details, Hank's letters from Europe gave us graphic accounts of his first days in action in France, commanding a platoon attached to the Ninth Army. Describing some frightening encounters with "Jerry" he still had not lost his sense of humor:

I got my first close view of Jerry and it was quite a surprise. I was acting as first scout of my platoon in an attack and I bumped right into a Jerry machine gun nest. I saw them before they saw me, but I was so surprised that for some reason I yelled, "Achtung!" Both of them jumped up and I dropped one and wounded the other. So you see my introduction to Jerry was quite rude. I wasn't really scared till afterwards.

More and more, he wrote of his repulsion with having to kill:

This war is hell! I hate every part of it. I'm getting a reputation in this company as a "killer" because I've killed a half dozen of them, but honestly I don't feel like a "killer" and I don't want to be one. I felt terrible the other day when I had to shoot two paratroopers in the back in a machine gun nest, but they were fixing to mow one of my squads down and I didn't have time to take them prisoners. I pray that I'm forgiven for that and every other time I've had to do it, but as long as I'm in the nasty business I have to...God knows I'm praying it will be over soon. It's soul destroying, that's what it is. I want so much to feel the peace and communion with the living Christ that can transport this lowly business of killing, but it's so hard up here...Everyone prays, but it's a prayer for deliverance from danger and a prayer motivated by fear. I want so much to feel that I have the peace with God that I ought to have.

Hank's penchant for making friends had served him well in his associations, as a trainee and as an officer, with American men of such diverse backgrounds, ranging from rough-hewn Southern "hillbillies," to college and professional men from all parts of the U.S. He was particularly devoted to the men in his platoon, "a bunch of men that can't be beat in any outfit... I'm quite proud of them and am ready to go through anything with them, after the way they've proven themselves." He also had considerable contact with European civilians, many of them openly grateful for the assistance of the Americans:

The reception we got from the Parisians is one I shall never forget. From every window and door they leaned out and shouted at us, threw flowers and kisses and expressed their genuine delight at seeing us crazy Americans. We reciprocated the affection most heartily and accepted the kisses of the beautiful Parisians with nothing less than warm delight. And I mean Paris has got the Babes! However, I did not let them take too great liberties, considering my marital status. The reception given us by the Belgians was even more touching still. They brought out bread, wine and beer for everybody, in spite of the food shortage. When I told several people that I was born in the Congo, I thought they would fall over my neck. Incidentally, my French improves with practice. I can get along all right. However, I can't use it anymore where I am because they speak this Kraut. Haven't seen any civilians over here though. You either have to intern them or shoot them, for they are very unfriendly.

Abie, who was teaching at Tex-Mex, a Presbyterian school for Mexicans, heard regularly from Hank for a while. On December 15 he wrote her:

Life is a little more irregular than when I last wrote, and you may not hear from me as often as before.

After that the letters stopped completely. What he was unable to tell her was that his company was now fully engaged in the Battle of the Bulge. As weeks went by with no further word, all of us shared Abie's anxiety, knowing Hank was bound to be in the thick of fighting somewhere. We also worried about Charles, from whom we had received little news since he left for the Pacific. For our parents in Congo, where

little mail from any of us was getting through, it was particularly hard. The main news they got was the daily BBC reports on the fighting in Europe.

With three brothers now in the service, Sid and I were the main U.S. contacts for our immediate family, circulating and copying family letters, news items and occasional bulletins from the Foreign Mission Committee. We kept in touch with our aunts in Hickory, who still provided a home for us where we might spend a holiday or have a reunion. I was pretty busy with my job at the church, and found some understanding friends there, some of whom also had family members at the battle fronts. As we heard more and more reports of men killed or missing in action, some of them people we knew, we wondered who would be next to receive the dreaded telegram. It seemed to be my family's turn, that day in late December, when a telegram was delivered to me at my office at the church. Trembling, I opened it to read the cryptic message: Charles had been wounded at sea and was on his way home. No more details! Fortunately we were spared a long wait for more news because we soon heard directly from Charles himself. He had been burned rather badly when a kamikaze plane dived down on the deck of his ship, causing it to sink. Everyone was rescued and he was now recovering in a Navy hospital, expecting to be discharged soon. The best news was that Charles was relieved from further duty with the Navy, and could soon return to civilian life, decorated with a Purple Heart. Frances and Charles soon had a joyful reunion in California, and she, too, assured us that Charles was all right in spite of his harrowing experience.

In early January, as we were all still reeling from the news about Charles, another telegram arrived, this time with darker implications. Hank was "Missing in action." We knew there was some possibility that Hank was still alive, but I was overwhelmed with the feeling that I would never see my brother again, and began thinking of all he had meant to me and our family, the freest spirit of us all. While his zest for life and endless curiosity had sometimes put him at odds with our parents' high expectations for us, Hank's generous spirit and ability to relate to all kinds of people had helped him solve the problem of being a child of two very different worlds more successfully than some of the rest of us. As the terrible news sank in, I was filled with remorse about all the things I had never said to Hank to let him know how proud I was of him. Still, as the friends who came to comfort reminded me, there was the possibility that Hank might be alive, perhaps a prisoner. Abie's strength and spirit of hope was inspiring to all of us. Replying to a letter I had written to him about Charles' wounding and Hank's "missing in action," David wrote from his Naval training base that he was thankful Charles was alive, but admitted he had some doubts about Hank's survival:

We are so besieged by men telling us that in a few months at least 50% of us will be dead, wounded or shell-shocked.

He did say that my letters and those from other family members made him "feel better."

Our parents received the news in a cable sent by the Foreign Mission Committee while they were still at Mutoto. In his letter to all of us, Dad again directed many of his remarks to Abie:

We received this morning the news that we had dreaded that we would receive after the terrible battles in which Henry has been engaged...The missionaries and friends have been wonderful in their sympathy for us. Of course we are terribly shocked and grieved, but we can still cling to the hope, however dim it may be, that in some way Henry may yet turn up alive.

We are thinking of you, Anne Boyd, darling, and know how your heart is breaking, but we can all be so deeply grateful that no one was better prepared to meet his King in heaven, if Henry has been killed. We immediately thought how comforting it might be to us and to you, to have you out here with us as soon as you can get here, and Mother and I should be only too glad to pay expenses in getting you out here; but with Roy and Nonie expecting to go on furlough in June, I believe it is, it would be selfish in us to claim you when you might miss them. But we want you to know that you will always be our own daughter.

Mother's reactions were similar:

Maybe you can guess the shock we had when the cable about Henry came this morning. I still feel that I am walking in my sleep, and hardly realize what it all means or may mean. Several friends have told of a number of cases that were reported missing and later found to be alive, so we shall cling to that hope as long as possible...Anne Boyd, we just long to do something to help you bear the strain of waiting for whatever the news will be, but all we can do is commit you to our Father's loving care, and we know He will give you the courage and strength you need. How glad we are that you two had the happy months together, and you will always be our very own daughter. We had just such a happy weekend with your father and mother here, and they had left about two hours before the cable came.

Later from Luebo, where they moved almost immediately afterwards, Dad wrote:

It has been hard, as you may well suppose, to think of anything else except the cablegram that reached us at Mutoto about Henry's missing in action. If the news had to come, we were glad that it reached us there among missionary and native friends, and not at some point like Lisbon or Lobito. We have tried to bury our sorrow and anguish in work.

Their missionary colleagues at Luebo, including Winnie Kellersberger Vass and her husband, were also most supportive. Mother was especially touched when Winnie brought over a bunch of roses with a note saying "what a wonderful inspiration you and Uncle Charlie are to all of us these days, because of the grace of God, which is so apparent in your lives." Our parents' cook, Ntambue, wrote out a number of Bible verses which he thought would comfort them. Such caring from the people around

them was especially important at this time when many of our letters from the U.S. were not getting through because of torpedoed ships and other war disruptions. Fortunately, soon after I wrote them about Charles' wounding, they received a reassuring letter from Charles himself. Urging us to never keep any news from them, "no matter how bad it is," Mother described a dream she had:

One night last week I had stayed awake so long and just before the bell rang to get us up at 5:30 I dropped off long enough to see Charles in my dream. At first I could not tell whether it was Charles or Henry and then discovered the Navy uniform. Come again to see me, please.

Early in the year, after long deliberation, Sid decided to join his brothers in the military service as an Army chaplain. He and Mary Council left North Wilkesboro and were staying with Mary Council's family in Greenville while Sid prepared his papers and awaited his orders.

Time seemed to stand still as we all waited for further word about Hank, but it was only a few weeks before Abie wired us the good news. Hank was alive, and a prisoner in Germany! We soon got more details from Hank himself, on a German postcard dated January 16:

Captured on December 18 in Belgium. Wounded. Lost left eye, but am getting along fine in a hospital for prisoners. Am getting excellent treatment, and thanks to the R.C. (Red Cross) food parcels am not starving. Feel no bitterness at all and only thankfulness to God for His fine care. Don't worry but pray this will be over soon. Please write to address on front. Love,
Hank

What a celebration for all of us, especially for Abie, so brave and trusting all along. In Hickory, Nannie, abandoning all thoughts of economy, sent wires to Abie, Charles and David, and also notified Nanmother Crane in Georgia. "We are happy beyond words to know that Henry is safe," Nannie wrote me. She assumed correctly that Sid and I had received the same original wire from Abie, as had the Dixons. We all confirmed that the Foreign Mission Committee was sending a cable to Congo. Not surprising, the letters we received not long afterwards were full of thanksgiving, as Mother wrote:

Can you imagine the joy in our home Sunday when we got the cable that Henry is safe in a prison hospital. Of course we long for more news but are so THANKFUL to know he is alive. When I went down to tell Baba Konkolonga (who has prayed so hard for him) she said, "I told you all the time you would hear he is alive." I told her I had never doubted that God is able to answer our prayers as He did, but was not sure that His will would be for that answer.

David, now almost ready to graduate from the Quartermaster School in Bainbridge, Maryland, wrote me to say how glad he was to know Hank was alive, adding:

He will certainly be among the few fortunate enough to come home after VE day, rather than among those Gen. Marshall has stated will go straight to the Pacific.

David had just recently received word that Gilbert, his roommate and best friend at Davidson, had become a war casualty.

As Hank was still a prisoner there remained many questions about his return, but at least Charles was now out of the conflict. I had a wonderful reunion with him and Frances when we all gathered in Hickory. Sid and Mary Council also joined us, and anticipating the gathering, Sid wrote a general family letter in which he recalled "that aria from Faust which we sang so much that Christmas in Tuscaloosa before Charlie went into the Navy, 'Even bravest heart may swell at the moment of farewell.' How good it is to look back on the farewell, and forward to the reunion."

While the reunion was far from complete and Sid himself, along with David, would soon be on the battle lines, we enjoyed the moment for what it was. Not long afterwards there was more good news for Charles as he got a civilian appointment teaching English at the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

Through all our family crises, Earl and Eunice Berg had been wonderfully supportive friends, and singing with them in the choir was an ever-happy experience. A most memorable event, one that left me in a trance for several days, was our performance of Bach's Easter Cantata, "Christ Lay in Death's Dark Tomb." The music program to some extent helped offset some of the less enjoyable aspects of my work at the church, particularly the unsettled condition of church programs and lack of cooperation of some of the staff since the departure of the minister. With no prospect of change in the situation any time soon, I began to question how long I wanted to stay there.

Our hopes for Hank's early release from prison grew as the reports from Europe continued to indicate an imminent victory for the Allies. In Congo, our parents were glued daily to the BBC radio reports, waiting for such news. Even after the final German surrender and liberation of prisoners we had no details of Hank's whereabouts, until receiving a V-mail message directly from him, dated April 27, and written from "somewhere in Germany:"

Perhaps by now you have learned of my being liberated by American troops after four and a half months as a prisoner of war. Liberation came two days ago and my heart is still really too full to take it all in.

I was captured after being wounded in the German counter offensive near Malmedy in Belgium, on December 18th. Except for the first month I have not suffered too much at the hands of the Krauts, but that is a long story, which will bear telling when I get home, which I hope will be within a few weeks. I hope to be flown home but I'm not going to get my hopes too high. We are being flown to England, however. I lost my left eye, but it isn't too noticeable as I have already been fitted with an artificial eye. I'm

hoping that Anne Boyd can meet me in New York and we can stop over on our way to Texas to visit you, but I don't know yet what circumstances will be. I'll have 30 days in a General Hospital and then 30 days leave, but after that I don't know what I'm going to do.

It was well over a month before Hank was reunited with Abie in Texas, and later than that before the rest of us saw him, but the news of his freedom was cause for all of us to celebrate. In Congo, even before our parents got the news of Hank's liberation, celebrations of the final surrender of Germany had already taken place at Luebo and all over the mission field. One of these was a joint celebration of the Mission with the State, at Luluabourg, where McMurray's choir sang the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah," as well as "La Brabanconne," the Belgium national anthem. Dad wrote:

While we can rejoice at the defeat of Germany and the breakup of the awful Nazi menace, this is more of a time for sober reflection on how we shall prevent another such devastating and horrible war. I hope that none of my children may be called to fight in another such war. We have certainly done our part as a family in this war.

Some weeks after his return, while still in the army hospital in El Paso, Texas, Hank wrote a very long letter to Charles and Sid, the first of a number of letters to family and friends recounting his experiences in Europe in some detail. As indicated at the beginning of this letter, he was trying to convey to himself and to others, some understanding of what he had been through emotionally and psychologically:

I'm afraid my very infrequent letters from overseas were a bit too stiff and forced—a result, as Charlie will most certainly understand, having gone through it himself, of utter mental and emotional exhaustion. Even in England, after I was liberated, I just couldn't write. Maybe it was the terrific anticlimax and result of nervous untautening (if there is such a word). Thank God, that period and the consequent depression is past and I feel like a human being again.

Congratulating Charles on his promotion and the Annapolis post, he wrote:

Well, you deserve it. You had eighteen months of it and I had only four and a half. So I take off my hat to you as the veteran of the family. And, as a brother in the order of the Purple Heart, I welcome you, but somewhat unworthily, for I got mine for literally "sticking my neck out."

It was when Hank was firing an automatic rifle from the doorway of his command post, a farmhouse in Bulingen, near Malmedy in Belgium, surrounded by a German assault squad, that he was hit in the face by shrapnel from a grenade that hit the doorframe. Again, referring to the emotional aspects of the war, he wrote:

As a platoon leader I had to overcome fear or be a poor leader, and this meant an almost indifference to death. All my closest officer friends in the regiment were either

killed or wounded... Eight of my men were killed and about thirty wounded. War is the bitterest, ugliest, most cruel way of life conceivable. I killed 12 Krauts and got a medal for doing it, but I can feel no elation, no hate, in fact no emotion at all, except the bitter regret for a civilization that trained me to do this.

One of the most moving experiences Hank described in letters, and recounted to us in person, occurred soon after he was wounded. He was taken to the German field hospital, in an ambulance along with the German officer who had wounded him; in fact, they had wounded each other. Riding in the ambulance, this officer repeatedly kicked Hank in his wounded eye with his booted foot. At the field hospital Hank's eye had to be removed. He was told there was no anesthesia, and he was given strong liquor to drink in its place. Afterwards, he found himself placed in the officer's ward, next to the same young German officer. His captor tried his best to keep the hospital orderlies from doing anything for this American enemy. Almost delirious with pain and infection from his eye, Hank scraped snow off the windowsill to quench his thirst. On Christmas Eve, as the men lay there, ignoring each other, a group of German townsfolk came by, caroling to the patients. Stirred, as they sang "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht," Hank began to sing softly in English, "Silent Night, Holy Night." Then he noticed that the soldier next to him was crying. When he turned to look at him, the German officer raised himself to his elbow, and with tears on his cheeks, stretched his hand out to Hank, saying softly, "Comrade, I didn't know you were a Christian." As the carolers passed on, each of the two men ventured a few words in each other's language and then exchanged family snapshots drawn out from their wallets. The song of peace had new meaning now, as Hank recalled its association with other important times in his life:

A year before, Anne Boyd and I had spent our first Christmas together in Jacksonville. Six years before, a native choir at Mutoto had made that song particularly unforgettable.

Much as Hank had hoped that Abie could meet him in New York as soon as his ship arrived in the States, their reunion was delayed until he was finally released from the Army hospital. Abie was anxiously waiting across the state in San Antonio, where she had been living while teaching at Tex-Mex. Hank, of course, had never been there. On the final page of his letter to Charles and Sid, he told them the good news:

Tonight (June 19) I am leaving by plane for San Antonio. It almost seems like a dream to be going home again, though I've never been there before. "Home" is wherever she is.

In July, with two of our brothers now out of the conflict, and Sid not yet gone overseas, we were able to have an almost complete reunion of the family, minus David and our parents, at Charles and Frances' home in Annapolis. The three brothers looked so handsome in their uniforms. Hank's artificial eye was startling at first, but he joked so

much we soon forgot it. It was a very happy occasion, especially nice for me, with three sisters-in-law to save the conversations from being too male dominated.

Chapter 20

A Death in the Family

With David assigned to duty in the Pacific, and Sid also going overseas, our war worries were not entirely over, but it was a bit calmer for the present. I was getting more preoccupied with the situation at the church, which showed no signs of change any time soon. There were offers from other churches, but I wasn't considering any of them seriously because of my growing disinterest in continuing this kind of work anywhere. I was pulled more and more toward music, so I began investigating music schools where I could take some of the basic courses never available to me, and learn more about church music. The School of Sacred Music, at Union Theological Seminary, in New York City, which the Bergs told me about, offered a two-year course leading to a Masters Degree in Sacred Music. I applied there, not at all sure whether I would be accepted because I lacked such basics as music theory and composition. There was also a question of money, for though I had repaid my former student debts, savings from my modest salary were quite limited. However, the school accepted me for the fall term, and I was able to get a student loan. The church officers, still searching for a new minister, expressed real regret when I submitted my resignation, but I did agree to stay on until September. I would be leaving some good friends, but the prospect of going to New York was exciting. I was even happier when I learned that Earl Berg would be going to Union for the fall term, to take some special courses at the music school.

In a letter to Sid and me, David, writing from his ship on the way to an undisclosed destination, "the likeliest prospect being one which is much in the headlines recently," told me how much his appreciation of the "power of song" had increased after hearing Marian Anderson singing "Ave Maria" on a record during a church service on the ship. Although it was quite likely boredom with his ship duties that had intensified David's response to the music, which he said "made more than one guy today reminisce about his sister, mother, or sweetheart," I found it touching when he asked me to disregard "all my previous attempts to seem like a tough guy, immune to aesthetic things." In another letter, David also validated Sid's decision to become a chaplain, citing his own disappointment with most of the ones he had encountered so far:

They all seem to think that to get close to the men they've got to partake of some of the same vices, but that only alienates them from their purpose and loses respect for religion itself. I know you'll make a two-fisted soldier without compromising your code of Christian conduct.

One of Sid's good friends, a classmate at Union Seminary in Richmond, had been somewhat disappointed in Sid's decision to go into chaplaincy now, rather than join

him as a missionary in Congo. Mail to and from Congo was a bit more regular now, even though it still took a long time for our parents to receive and respond to news reported in our letters. Their letters to us reflected some problems with adjustment to Luebo. A dwindling missionary pool forced them to take over major responsibility for all of the educational programs, which included a school of over 3000 students. Also, the household help they brought from Mutoto were not as "cosmopolitan" as the Luebo Africans, and had adjustment problems of their own. Speaking of the greater number of thieves and "immoral women" found at Luebo, Dad wrote:

The villages have changed very radically since we were here in 1918, and the natives have become far more worldly wise, as well as more steeped in some of the world's vices. Still, the attendance at the three big churches is good, and there are any number of fine natives.

Some other changes, of which he wrote, such as the availability of fresh beef and apples at the State Post, had little meaning for the Congolese.

Both parents had health problems. Except for a heart condition that had to be monitored carefully, Dad had been well until late April, when a sudden and severe gall bladder attack put him in bed for about ten days. He was recovered and back to work by the time he wrote to us. Mother kept going at her same pace, in spite of the fact that she was not at all well. Dr. King, who had been their doctor at Mutoto, was now at Luebo and attending to their health. He had left the mission in 1931 because his wife was ill. He remained in the States until well after her death, and then returned to Congo in 1944.

An early birthday letter, written to me by Mother in June, contained the usual expressions of love and pride in her only daughter, and indicated that she was having some real satisfaction in her work at Luebo:

This week has been more like old time work at Mutoto than I have ever had since coming back. Each morning this week I have taught normal work to about 50 teachers, and you know I love to hear myself talk and love to teach. They have evidently not had much like this, and seemed so very interested. One of them was thanking me the other day for all I had been given them, and I told him I would thank them when I saw them putting into practice the things we had been learning. Yesterday, when we were trying to sum up what we had gotten, one of our best teachers, one in charge of the school at Ibanche, said, "The thing that has impressed me most is the fact that the responsibility of lifting up our race, rests on us, and not on the bambi (missionaries)." I felt like I had gotten somewhere if they had learned that, even though he was the only one to get it.

Adding his own birthday greetings in an attachment to Mother's letter, Dad indicated how much he appreciated the situation at Luebo, in contrast to his experience at Stillman Institute in Alabama:

We have certainly been given a cordial welcome here by missionaries and natives, and find a good many happy features about the work. At least we are free from the constant bickering and strife that was the order of the day in that home mission institution.

Writing to Hank and Abie at the end of June, after she heard they were together in Texas, Mother expressed her joy at the reunion, telling them to let “those other parents (the Clevelands) who are on their way, give you some of the hugs and love we want to give you.” Commenting also on the efforts she and Dad were making to keep the schools going, “a wonderful opportunity, and enough to keep us from sitting down and twiddling our thumbs,” she added:

How we would like to take off some years of our life and be a bit younger and stronger for this big job. The question now is to see what things are most essential and let the rest go undone as we can not do all that needs to be done. Do wish some of those waiting to come would come on out, for there are a lot leaving now, and no new or old ones to take their place.

Several weeks later Dad wrote that instead of the over twenty missionaries previously at Luebo, there were now only ten, putting a still heavier burden on him and Mother:

For all my life in Congo I have had to do either building or repairing on the institutions that I have directed, and this term I had looked forward to freedom from this sort of thing. However, I have had a lot of repairing to do.

He went on to describe the large amount of work necessary on all the school buildings. In the same letter he mentioned that Mother had not been well:

That old kidney trouble that has been troubling her for the past few years, worse than ever, flared up again recently. Dr. King gave her penicillin, but this so far does not seem to have had the wonderful effects it is reported to have usually. He has been very solicitous, and has does all he can for her, and I hope she will soon respond to the treatment. In the meantime she is trying to be good and not undertake any Mission work of any kind until she feels equal to it.

Our next letter, written by Dad to the whole family in late July, was from Mutoto, where he and Mother were staying for a few days, before taking a plane from Luluabourg to Johannesburg, South Africa. Mother needed to receive further diagnosis of her problem. For the benefit of any who did not have the earlier details, he wrote:

In recent months she had been suffering from severe trouble that Drs. King and Smith diagnosed as an inflammation of the bladder. Not having the proper facilities for determining the exact cause of her trouble, or for treating her on this field, they felt it

was wise for us to go to Johannesburg, where she can get the proper diagnosis, as well as the proper treatment. Neither of them considers that she is in need of a major operation, nor that she is too seriously ill, but if she is to stay out here and do anything at all without this continual pain and annoyance from the trouble, she will have to get relief. It has been pulling her down too much. Johannesburg is probably the best medical center in all the southern portion of the continent, and they feel sure that she can get expert attention there. I am not trying to minimize the situation, but am passing on what these doctors have told us. Both are as fine medical men as can be found, but neither of them professes to know so much as a specialist in kidney and bladder diseases. We are fortunate in having these two mission doctors, and Dr. Piper of the Methodist Mission, who is an experienced missionary doctor (and happened to be at Luebo for some dental work) agreed with them in their conclusions.

We came to Mutoto in order to give Mother a rest before taking the plane for Jo'burg on Saturday, and this has proved wise, for here she does not have to think about meals or the housekeeping, and we do not have anything like the noise we have at Luebo. She stood the long trip here well, and has very definitely improved over her condition of several days before we left Luebo. We can take heart from this, and I believe that she will soon be much better. Both doctors say that such a condition as this has been brought on by nothing that she may have done, and that it could hardly have been anticipated before we left the States.

Our fine friend, the Belgian Commissioner of the District, did us a wonderful kindness. He saw me at Luluabourg Wednesday, and asked me about the matter; so I asked him if he could use his influence in getting us on the plane for Jo'burg. He sent me a special messenger yesterday to say that the places on the plane have been provided. This will save at least a week of trying to travel to Jo'burg, more than 2000 miles distant. This gentleman is a real friend of the Mission. Of course the expense of the trip will be much more than by train, but it is a big saving of time and energy.

About the same time that I received my copy of this general letter, I also got a personal letter from Dr. King. He said that Mother had asked him to write, but that he had "actually thought of doing so at times in the past to let you know that you were not forgotten by our family." In the letter he explained some of the clinical details, his consultation with the other doctors, and their conclusion that Mother needed a more complete diagnosis in Johannesburg. Though they doubted the presence of any malignancy, contrary to Dad's impression he did have some questions about the thoroughness of the examination Mother had before she left the States:

I have every hope that after treatment by a good man in this line she will be able to return to her work with real pleasure. There are many conditions that might cause this trouble, and it is too bad that she was not examined for this condition before leaving home. I am sure you know about your father's sickness in April, and while he is doing nicely at this time, we are advising him to have some x-ray studies made.

I hope that this gets to you promptly so that you will know just how things are before hearing rumors from other sources. I also hope that your mother receives some good letters from some of you today, as nothing would give her so much of a lift as that just now, though she is always trying to cheer up the other fellow. Air mail just seems to be stuck somewhere for the last few months, and each week we hope that the dam will have gone down—maybe today?

On August 22 I received a telegram from the Foreign Mission Committee in Nashville, Tennessee, with the news we had dreaded: Mother's condition was discovered to be malignant, and they were sending her home immediately. The message had come from Allen Craig, the APCM business man, in a cable sent on August 13, received in Nashville on August 22, in which Craig also requested the Committee to contact the State Department and New York steamship lines, to secure priority transport for Mother and Dad on the first available boat from Matadi after August 25. The Foreign Mission Committee sent me a letter two days later, with a copy of the cable they had sent to Mr. Craig, following their contacts with the boat lines and the State Department:

Your cable August 13 received August 22nd stop Barber Lines cabled Agents Huilever S.A. requesting high priority for Cranes earliest possible opportunity stop If boat unavailable State Dept. advises Cranes contact nearest ATC referring American Consul to Foreign Service Circular 297 of December 23, 1943.

The Foreign Service Circular 297 referred to in the cable authorized the American Consul to give priority on an American Transport Command plane in cases of emergency.

Though we couldn't reach either Sid or David immediately, the rest of our family, including our aunts in Hickory, conferred on the phone, trying to reassure each other and make some plans. Though we couldn't be sure yet when Mother and Dad would land in the States, within a week, perhaps, if they came by plane, we did know that they would go to the cancer center at Memorial Hospital (now Sloan-Kettering), in New York City. It was still some time before my school was scheduled to begin, but I decided to go on to New York so I could be there when my parents arrived. Charles and Hank also planned to come as soon as they could.

The last few days in Charlotte were very full, trying to leave my work at the church in some order, packing and saying goodbye to friends. Those who had supported me in family crises this incredible year were there again, offering their prayers, love and practical help. Letters from some of the young people I worked with followed me even to New York, as did a formal resolution of appreciation from the church officers.

By the time I got to New York my parents had already arrived, and Mother was at Memorial Hospital undergoing examination. Uncle Eckard, Dad's brother, was at the train to meet me and took me directly to the hospital. Mother's condition, weakened

further by the long trip, allowed only a brief kiss and a hug, but she was obviously glad to see me. In the emotional reunion with Dad, outside her room, he confirmed that Mother's illness was indeed serious but he still held hope that the doctors could deal with it successfully. We had a lot of time to talk together during the next few days. Neither Charles nor Hank had yet arrived, so Dad and I were spending our nights with Aunt Georgia's family in nearby Greenwich, Connecticut. Dad's youngest brother, Uncle Sid, also lived close by in Westchester, and kept in touch, as did Uncle Eckard and his wife Claire.

In addition to the family support, we were especially grateful to have the Kellersbergers close at hand. Dr. Kellersberger, and his wife Julia had moved to New York several years before, when he became General Secretary of the American Leprosy Mission. Their apartment on lower Fifth Avenue was open to us at all times, for rest, rendezvous with each other, and even some overnights when we needed to stay in the city. It was also comforting to us to have a friend with medical knowledge, who could help us understand Mother's condition and the recommendations for treatment being made by her doctors at Memorial Hospital.

After examining Mother the doctors concluded that, because of the extensive damage to her kidneys, the only solution was an operation. This operation would be so drastic that she would have to be fitted with a drain to an outside bag, to be worn for the rest of her life. Ever trusting, Mother told the doctors she knew that God would guide them, and, with Dad, agreed to the operation. The doctors started blood transfusions to strengthen her for the operation. Hank had arrived by then, and we both gave some of the blood Mother needed. We were all encouraged when she came through the operation successfully. Still very weak, she seemed more like herself, as each one of us made short visits to her room. The reunion with Hank, and then with Charles, her two sons returned safely back from the war, was in each case especially emotional. When Charles and Hank both had to leave a few days later, Mother appeared to be in stable condition. Shortly after they left she took a turn for the worse.

Dad and I kept our vigil at the hospital, but there was less and less response when we went into her room. One day when I went in she was in an oxygen tent. "You look tired," she said, and then drifted off to sleep. I wasn't sure she even knew me. For a moment she seemed to be talking to David, worrying about her youngest child.

Fearing the end was near, Dad and I moved from Greenwich into the city, Dad staying with the Kellersbergers and I with some other friends. We continued to spend our days at the hospital. Early on the morning of October 5, I got a phone call from Uncle Sid. "Your Mother passed away last night," he said. "Your Dad is already at the hospital and I am coming in a few minutes to take you there." Uncle Sid was a man of few words, but his sympathy and love were self-evident as he arrived, gave me a big hug and took me to his car. We found Dad at the hospital, looking rather dazed, and accompanied by the Kellersbergers. Though her death had been

expected in the last days, the actual fact of it was hard to take in. There was little we could say to each other, only hug and let the tears flow.

We were soon distracted from our grief by the many practical matters that had to be addressed. We called our scattered family, settled things with the hospital, and made arrangements for the funeral and trip to Hickory. The Kellersbergers were at our side, giving comfort and lots of practical help. In the haste of the journey from Congo, and his preoccupation with Mother's care, Dad had little time to attend to his own needs. He suddenly realized he had run out of clean shirts to wear, and no commercial laundry would be able to take care of the problem before our trip to Hickory. For Julia Kellersberger, however, there was never a "problem." She insisted on laundering the shirts herself, and by the time we left Dad had a set of beautifully washed and ironed shirts to wear.

Uncle Eckard accompanied Dad and me on the sad train journey to Hickory. It was a great comfort to have Hank and Charles at the station when we arrived. Their wives, as well as Sid's wife, Mary Council, were waiting at the Dixon home. The meeting at the house with Mother's sisters was very difficult for everyone. Among the unspoken thoughts there must have been the question of why Louise, the next to youngest of the sisters, was taken so soon, and ahead of two ailing older sisters. Everyone we knew in Hickory did their best to give us comfort, in spirit and in body, opening their homes to house some of the family, and taking care of all the business and funeral arrangements. The Presbyterian Church, where the service was held, was filled to capacity, and many wonderful tributes were paid to our modest and selfless mother. When we sang a hymn Dad had requested, "The Strife is O'er," set to the music of Palestrina, I joined in fervently, pushing back the tears. Mother had certainly fought her battles well!

Soon after the funeral we all scattered again to our various locations. Dad went to see his mother, who was still living in Winder, Georgia. Back in New York I moved into the dormitory and started classes at the Music School, but I was still much preoccupied with family matters, writing to David and Sid, and, of course, to Dad. From Winder, Dad wrote me a long letter, responding in part to what I had written to him, but also reviewing some of what we had just been through. There were many things we had not had a chance to talk about, such as Dad's future plans:

Your sweet letter came the other day, and it gave me much comfort. You say you "can't express yourself audibly," but you have done a pretty good job of it, I can tell you. Mother suggested at Jo'burg that we go back to Luebo and "stay until the Lord calls me," but I know now that it would never have done, even if I had considered the case hopeless, as I did not. I felt until the last few days of her life that something might be done for her to get well again, and, as you know, Dr. Dean did hold out hope for her. Craig said, "It would not be fair to the children for you to leave her on the field," and I concurred in that statement. In the light of all that has happened I know now that we did what was best, even if all means to save her failed. Three of you saw her when her mind was normal, and I am sure that the Lord has some great, unrevealed purpose in

letting us spend several thousand dollars in an apparently hopeless effort. But, as I should have added, it all worked out better when I had you with me during those days of tragedy.

I think you have done the right thing in going ahead with your plans, for while you could be of great comfort to me by being near to me at this time, as you certainly were at the time of real crisis, there is little in a physical way, as you express it, that can be done. If I had the money to support myself and keep you in school, it might be different, but I shall have to look for something that will at least keep me from having to be a care on anybody else.

In his letter, Dad referred to some problems with his mother, “buzzing around constantly.” Unlike his serious, scholarly father, now deceased, Nanmother Crane had always been a rather self-centered socialite, and her giddiness had increased with old age. Not only was she getting on Dad’s nerves, but the housekeeper hired to take care of her was also getting “fed up” with her eccentricities. Obviously the visit had not helped Dad very much, and he was glad to be leaving soon to talk about his own future with the Foreign Mission Committee in Nashville.

Some time later I received letters from David and Sid, both written just after receiving the news about Mother. David’s letter was full of self-deprecation, and reflected his almost worshipful feelings about her:

Letters from all the family brought me word last night of Mom’s passing, and I am afraid I am still unable to write a coherent letter. The most striking thing about your letters was the fact that all of you, even Daddy, were so anxious to help me bear it well when you all must have needed sympathy so much. I may have been more demonstrative with Mom than the rest of you, and I really did worship her, but there can be no measure of difference among us of how we felt. I am ashamed to admit my lack of spiritual courage, but I must have sobbed like a child, judging from the way the guys tried in their gruff way to console me. Measuring Daddy by my own weakness, I am even more proud of him and his courage than ever before during this crisis...I hope Daddy never feels lonely as long as he lives, even though his girl has gone home to God.

Mom must have looked beautiful in her death with that happy and loving smile...It is small wonder that so many, many people mourned her passing after the way she made friends so easily and charmingly.

In a note to me, David Added:

In a way I am glad I did not have to share with you and Daddy the pain of seeing her mind wander, although I shall never forget that in her last days I wasn’t there to love her, to beg her forgiveness for not writing more often, to assure her that I would endeavor to live more like her.

By contrast, Sid's letter, addressed to Charles, Hank and me, was typically more restrained but also filled with the sense of loss and concern for Dad:

Repeating my feelings on hearing about Mother's going would begin to seem as cold to me as a carbon copy might seem to two of you. My heart has gone out in deepest sympathy to you all, especially to David, and I have wished with all my heart that I could be with you now. Doubtless Mother's suffering was harder for you to bear than it has been for David and me even to hear of her leaving us....When I thought of Daddy's loneliness it just broke me up! They have been so thoroughly dependent on each other all these years together, that it's sad to think of him being without her. How grateful I am that you were all with him!

As David said, each one of us had our own special relationship with Mother. She had always been more effusive than Dad in expressing her feelings to us, but I always thought she was more reserved when talking about her children to other missionaries. A letter addressed to me by one of her colleagues after her death told a different story:

Dearest Louise,

You know that my heart is full of love and sympathy tonight for you dear children, but I am only writing a little line of comfort to you. If ever a daughter was loved, you surpassed them all. Louise was so proud of you, she loved you so deeply: you satisfied her whole heart. She always found some little bit of you in every conversation: it seemed to me she always thought of you. Her devotion to all of you was a beautiful thing, but her only daughter was the apple of her eye. May God keep and bless and comfort you, Dear...

A biographical sketch, written by another colleague for one of the church papers, also had much to say about Mother's family relations, as well as her professional contributions, as written in these excerpts:

Mrs. Crane's outstanding work was teaching and training the wives of the native evangelists and teachers, to be the much needed help-meets of their husbands...In addition to this, she found time to teach, not only her own, but other missionaries' children there at Mutoto. This was before the Central School was built and located on Lubondai station.

Mrs. Crane possessed the rare ability to do all this work on the outside, and yet not neglect her husband and children. Her home always looked neat and attractive, and the meals were well balanced and nourishing, even in the dry season. When illness came to fellow workers, she found the time to lend a helping hand...

In addition to her zeal and earnestness in her work, she also had a delightful sense of humor. Once while on furlough, when someone asked her if she had brought back any

pets such as parrots and monkeys, her reply was, "No, I've been kept busy chasing after little Cranes, I didn't have time for other pets."

Her earthly service came to an end on October 5, 1945, in a hospital in New York City. Not many women have filled their lives with as much love and unselfish service as did Louise Dixon Crane. No wonder the Congo natives named her "Mama Luse," (Mother Love).